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ABSTRACT

For many years, farmworkers in Zimbabwe have been a marginalized and neglected community. This book describes the lives of hired farmworkers' children in their own words. Over 850 children aged 10-17 were interviewed or wrote essays in English or Shona. Nearly all the children were in elementary school in grades 4-7. Many farm children undergo experiences of loss and deprivation, work, marriage at a very young age, and lives constrained by poverty and geographic isolation, yet they show no self-pity and have hopes for the future. An introduction discusses the need for nongovernmental organizations and development workers to listen to the opinions and priorities of the people who receive their assistance, including rural children, who have home and work responsibilities from an early age. The book is divided into nine sections that explore through the testimony of farm children issues of childhood; family life; the home, health, and preschool education; the farm; work; education and aspirations for the future; recreation; culture and history; and conceptions of the wider world. Each section includes background to the topic, the children's words and writings, and commentary and explanatory notes in the margins. A final section lists the names of the participating children, their farms, their schools, and their teachers, and briefly describes the work of Save the Children (UK) in Zimbabwe. (Contains photographs and children's illustrations.) (SV)

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Save the Children
United Kingdom

Children in our Midst

Children in our Midst

Voices of farmworkers children

researched and edited by

Irene McCartney

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Dedication

This publication was conceived and funded by
Save the Children, Harare
on behalf of the children of farm workers
whose lives have so often been ignored.

Thanks

This publication has depended on the hard work, enthusiasm and honesty of over 850 children and the book could and would not have been produced had they not participated so willingly. We hope it will serve to make their lives, and the lives of all the children who live in farming communities, better understood and better supported.

We are also very grateful to their headmasters, their teachers and the farm owners for their co-operation.

At its inception, the research for the project depended upon the generous assistance of the three SCF field workers: Andrew Muringaniza, Josephine Mutandiro and Irene Mutumbwa; as well as Di Auret and Tisa Chifunyise.

Amos Meki, Maxwell Hakata and Stanley Marimo deserve special mention for arranging and taking me out on field trips.

Very particular thanks are also due to Rosalie Wilson for her meticulous help with the editing and for her constant encouragement and support, to Pauline Brine of Fontline for her patience and flair and to Ian Bampton for scanning in all the many illustrations.

When translation was necessary, as it was on very many occasions, this was done by Taurai Piano who worked diligently to retain each child's voice and was always very willing to assist whenever it was necessary. And thanks are also due to Dr Emmanuel Chiwome for helping us with the translation of the proverbs and songs whenever this was possible which was not always the case.

Finally, I would like to thank Chris McIvor, the Director of Save the Children, for his decision to record the children's voices, and for offering me the opportunity to do so, as well as for being so openly available to discuss ideas and suggestions whenever it was necessary.

I.M.

Compiler's note

The children's voices in this book have been recorded mainly through their own writing in English and in Shona. A small number were collected through interviews. Nearly all the children were at primary school, and we worked with children from grades four to seven.

We have attempted to retain the freshness and individuality of each opinion or experience as told by themselves. Although minor grammatical and spelling mistakes have been corrected, we chose not to smooth these out entirely as we felt this would give a distorted picture of their age, education and vulnerability. Many of them are not used to writing about themselves or giving their opinions. The freshness of their speech and of their perceptions often reveals itself in their use of metaphor, simile and phraseology.

We asked them to be as honest as possible, because, as we told them, it is only through making their experiences known, that the lives of future children living on farms might be improved. They all undertook the tasks set them with great seriousness and a sense of responsibility.

We hope that they will be heard in the same way.

I.M.

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Glossary

ambuya – grandmother

baba – father

Blair toilets – low-cost, appropriate technology pit latrines whose construction limits the spread of communicable diseases

chabuta – card game

chigure/zvigure – masked dancer

chinamwari – initiation practice

chimurenga – freedom, the liberation movement

dagga – *mbanje* or marihuana

derere – leaf vegetable similar to spinach

dhuku – scarf tied round the head

dombo/matombo – rock, stone

GMB – Grain Marketing Board

hacha – fruit of the *muhacha* (*mobola* plum) tree

hosho – rattle

hot-seating – when schools run two concurrent timetables with two groups of children e.g., the first group might attend in the mornings, the second during the afternoons

hute – fruit of the *mukute* (*Syzygium*) tree

huve - rabbit

jeko - scythe

kanzota – leaves used as relish

lobola – bride price

madhongi – donkey

mahewu – thick home-made beer

maputi – roasted dry maize

maputi sweets – popcorn

matamba – fruits from the wild orange tree

matohwe – fruit of the *mutowe* (*Azanza garckeana*) tree

mazambia – cloth worn round the waist

mazhanje/muzhanje – fruit of the mahobohobo or wild loquat tree

Mazoe – brand name for orange squash

mbezo – an adze or plane; a cutting tool

mbira – thumb piano made in small gourd which acts as a resonator

mbuya – grandmother; also term of seniority and respect

mowa – wild spinach

mudyakari/mujakari – wild vegetable: *Cleome monophylla*

murungu – white person

n'anga – a healer, a person who uses spiritual powers to heal or seek out the cause of illness or wrong-doing

nhodo – children's game like jacks

nhungu/nhuguru – wild fruit: *Flacourtia indica*

nyevhe – leaves from a wild plant (*Cleome gynandra*) from which relish is made

nzeve – mushrooms

pfuko – calabash used for drinking beer

pole and dagga – traditional round rooms/houses made with poles; earth used as plaster, and thatched with grass

runi – see nyevhe

sadza – thick maize-meal porridge

Scuds – beer made to a traditional recipe and served in plastic containers colloquially called scuds because they resemble the missile

Surf – washing powder

tete – aunt

tsubvu – fruit from the wild cocoa or chocolate berry tree

Vapostori – a religious sect named after the Apostles

ZESA – Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority

zvikirwa/svikiro – spirit medium or prophet

Introduction

One of the problems associated with development work is that the people who are the targets of our assistance often become objects, statistics, recipients of aid. We number them in proposals, analyse their needs in plans and strategies and evaluate our success or failure in end-of-project reports. But the beneficiaries rarely come alive as subjects, as people with emotions, wishes, opinions and lives every bit as complex as our own.

The frequent invisibility of the people we are supposed to be helping can have several consequences. Within the development establishment it can engender an attitude of condescension and pity. Because they are quite literally not seen, the project beneficiaries are unable to challenge us, to question our assumption that we, the giver, must always know best. This deprives us, both as individuals and as members of organizations, of the opportunity to learn, not only about more appropriate aid, a better intervention in the future, but also about ourselves. Through the challenge of experiencing other cultures, attitudes and behaviours,we progress. But the targets of aid – the project statistics – stripped of history and tradition, offer us no opportunity for growth and personal development.

Their invisibility is also one of the reasons why the experience of aid for so many communities can be a negative one. It might be that at the end of the project a school has been built, a clinic established, an orchard left behind. But has the process of establishing these been an empowering one that involved the recipient and donor in an equitable and open partnership? If communities feel that they are perceived as little more than recipients of charity, they will assume a passive role. A project might be accepted but it will never be genuinely owned, and will not provide the experience from which the community itself can further develop and learn.

Perhaps this is why, in the Zambezi Valley, so many of the wells that Save the Children has dug, the pumps that we have installed and the dams that we have constructed are either in a state of disrepair or are under-utilized. The temptation has been to criticize the communities in which these facilities were established. We have characterized their lack of interest in maintaining these services as a sign of backwardness and ignorance. We have been less willing, however, to examine our own methodologies of working.

How did we interact with the people in these villages? How many of our project staff understood the language of the communities in which we were located? Did we take the time to listen to their perceptions and views? Were we so intent on meeting project deadlines that we failed to establish a sense of ownership and responsibility among the people, towards the facilities we were constructing?

Fortunately, this programme has now redirected its focus, and much more of our work in the Zambezi Valley is about encouraging community ownership of water points. But the lessons are instructive. Members of the community, especially women and children, have complained about their former invisibility and lack of involvement in project planning. Despite the fact that they are much more responsible than men for water collection – and for its utilization and management in the household – women and children were rarely consulted in the few community discussions that had previously taken place.

If people feel invisible, because we do not take the time to listen or to know them, then development will always be compromised. Confronted with a government official or non-governmental organisation (NGO) project officer who is dismissive of their contributions, the community will manifest hostility through passivity and inaction. They wait for assistance when they could do it themselves. The pump that needs a minor repair is unused for six months, until the local government department responsible for maintenance manages to find the transport to visit the village. The dam constructed by a foreign organization that never involved the local people in the siting, maintenance and management of the facility will become silted up, as the community sees no point in protecting the watershed surrounding it.

In other words, the process of establishing projects is often as important as their outcome. And that process will be incomplete if we do not learn to listen, and to seek to understand the people we are trying to help. Without this effort we will continue to promote the cult of the expert, the expatriate outsider who always knows best, or the young university graduate dismissive of indigenous knowledge and experience. The opportunity that a project should provide for a community to experiment and learn, to assume responsibility for its own development, will be lost. We will have created a dependency where formerly there might have been community initiative and local control. Wrote one author, 'If you cannot be bothered to understand the local situation properly and ensure that change is rooted in the social fabric, stay away.'[1] Otherwise the consequences may be fatal, like the Bangladeshi villagers now at risk from arsenic poisoning because Western engineers could not be bothered to test the water from tube wells funded by foreign aid.

Save the Children Fund (UK) has been working on commercial farms in Zimbabwe for almost two decades. What prompted our interest in farmworker communities was their neglect by both the pre- and post-independence governments, and official refusal to genuinely acknowledge responsibility for a population on which much of the productive wealth of the country was based. At the same time, many farm owners also manifested an unwillingness to contribute to the welfare of their workers, seeing this as the responsibility of either local or national government. The result has been that a community of some two million people has largely remained marginalized from the developments in health care, education and social service provision that benefited other sectors of Zimbabwean society in the post-independence era.

One publication presented the situation of commercial farm workers in the following terms:

> *If need constitutes one of the criteria for development assistance, then farm-worker communities in Zimbabwe are certainly a major priority. The statistics are there for all to read: the worst rates of malnutrition, maternal mortality and communicable diseases, the poorest accommodation and sanitation provision, the lowest levels of health care, education and social services in the country. The physical evidence is also incontrovertible. No one visiting a cramped*

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[1] Edwards, Michael , Future Positive – International Co-operation in the 21st Century, Earthscan Ltd., London,1999, page 81

> *compound on the tobacco farms of Mashonaland province or the agro-industrial estates of eastern Zimbabwe can fail to be moved by the squalor of its inhabitants, the desperation of its older people and migrant workers as they approach their declining years, the hopelessness of young people faced with lives as unpromising as those of their parents.*[2]

Fortunately, there are signs that this era of marginalization is coming to an end. Partly through the catalyst of the Save the Children farmworker programme in Mashonaland Central, government services in health and education are now being extended to formerly neglected communities in commercial farming areas. With local government reform there are also moves to ensure greater representation of this community in the political and economic life of the country. Moreover, encouraged by evidence that a better-serviced workforce is a more productive one, farm owners are also manifesting greater commitment to the welfare of their labourers.

Other NGOs, such as the Farm Community Trust of Zimbabwe and the Farm Orphan Support Trust have also appeared on the scene, offering assistance in such areas as basic education, primary health care, housing and sanitation, orphan care and community development. Most importantly, farmworker communities themselves are mobilizing for change and, through the forum of Farm Development Committees (which also includes the participation of owners), are being encouraged to take some responsibility for the betterment of their own living and working conditions. Yet, despite the arrival of long overdue support, the fact remains that we know very little about these communities. Their ethnic status, lack of political influence and economic marginalization have largely rendered them invisible. Attempts to promote development in farmworker communities, therefore, need to be complemented by sufficient attention to the culture, history, perceptions and aspirations of the intended beneficiaries. As stated previously, a deficiency in a knowledge of local communities by organizations working in the field of development, will limit their effectiveness. The promotion of self-help will be compromised if we do not take time to listen to what the people might want to tell us, so that they can assert themselves as legitimate and equitable partners in the process of change.

In the case of children, this need to listen is particularly important. There are several reasons for this. The first is that organizations ostensibly working for the improvement of children's lives, whether in commercial farms or other marginalized sectors of Zimbabwe's population, can no longer assume that projects targeted at adults will automatically benefit younger people in the community. We now have enough experience to question this assumption.

The same programme that saw the construction of wells and dams in the Zambezi Valley, for example, has been criticized by children for not answering their needs. Many wells were sited far away from schools and homesteads. The pumps that were installed sometimes required three or four children to operate them because they were so heavy. The children pointed out that it was most often not their parents who collected water, but the children themselves. Yet, they were never consulted in the design, implementation and evaluation of a programme that had a direct impact on their lives.

The second reason is that the act of listening confers a feeling of legitimacy and empowerment on the person talking – a sense of identity that charitable intervention can all too often undermine. For many children this is an invaluable training, and a preparation for their future role as active and vibrant members of their community. Being offered a voice is an opportunity for children to acquire skills of analysis, discussion and communication as well as helping them to respect and value the opinions of others. Last year, in

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[2] McIvor, Chris. The Struggle for Health. CIIR, Harare, 1995, page 62

a project organized by Save the Children to investigate the conditions of children in informal urban communities in Harare, the decision to place them at the centre of the research was extremely popular with young people themselves. Many of them claimed that this was the first time anyone had shown a willingness to listen to their opinions. School and home, they claimed, did not offer them this opportunity. Adults involved in the project remarked on the growth in confidence and self-esteem among the young researchers. Claimed one of the children:

> *Before the research project I was embarrassed to stand in front of people and talk. However, because of this research, I am now able to stand in front of people and engage them in discussions. The other benefit is that after making a presentation and going through a question and answer session, people in the research group would give you feedback. Listening to others is something we all need to improve.*[3]

Children in our Midst was conceived and managed, largely in order to give children on commercial farms a similar opportunity to have their voices heard on a range of issues that affect them. This was partly in order to remedy some gaps in our knowledge about their situation so as to improve the quality of programme interventions. However, the methodologies of consultation, and the key involvement of children in recording their own experiences – their sense of society and history, the problems that affect their lives, their hopes and aspirations – were also designed to challenge a popular stereotype of children as passive and uninformed, unable to contribute to the development and betterment of their own lives.

Part of the Western notion of childhood is that it is a time of innocence and non-responsibility when children should not be burdened with adult cares and problems. A large part of social welfare programmes and practices in these countries has been to progressively remove responsibilities from children in line with this concept. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why there is such a vigorous lobby in Western countries against child labour in other parts of the world.

This concept of childhood is not only a luxury that few other cultures can afford, but is also something that local tradition implicitly rejects. This book shows that children on commercial farms in Zimbabwe, even from a very young age, have responsibilities to collect water, to find fuelwood, to grow vegetables, to look after the family's animals etc. And if this labour does not compromise their rights to health, to formal education, to recreation and welfare it is also regarded by traditional culture as a legitimate part of their education and upbringing – a preparation for adult roles. Given the fact that children do have these responsibilities, does it therefore make any sense to exclude them from having an input into decisions which concern their welfare?

Forestry officers, sent to counsel communities about the value of trees, do not routinely speak to groups of children who are often primarily responsible in households for fuelwood collection. Water engineers seldom ask the girls and boys responsible for collecting water where they should site a well or what type of equipment would be appropriate. Agricultural advisors do not teach children the principles of organic farming or a range of techniques to promote soil fertility, even when they know that many of these youngsters have major responsibilities for looking after the family's fields.

In other words, the invisibility of children effectively means that a valuable human resource, often with an intimate knowledge of local surroundings, is not having its potential realized by contributing to the development of their communities. At the same time the opportunity to learn and to acquire the habit of responsibility is being denied them. Within responsible limits, dictated by age, ability and potential, the participation of children should not be perceived as a threat to adult control or a means of promoting unruly and undisciplined behaviour, but as a positive contribution that has both present and future benefits.

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[3] Do Not Look Down On Us, SCF, Harare, 1999, page 12

This book is divided into nine sections which explore – through the contributions of farm children – issues such as childhood, their families, work, education, recreation, culture and history, the farm, their hopes and aspirations for the future, and their concepts of the wider world. In order to remain as true to the original voices as possible, there has been little editorial intrusion in the information provided. Each chapter opens with a short background to the topic under discussion and provides a brief running commentary when it is felt that a point needs amplification or clarification. The overriding principle, however, has been to maintain the integrity of the children's presentations.

Their testimonies show several things. They remind us of the complexity of people's lives, and the fact that there are no neat divisions or compartments within which their experiences can be neatly categorized. There are contradictions both within and between the presentations of individual children. This is a salutary reminder to all of us involved with development work that we are dealing with individuals who do not easily fit into neat project classifications and statistics. They are not objects that we can somehow manipulate like pieces on a chessboard.

The narratives also reveal areas of experience in children's lives, which are often hidden or obscure. The importance of family life and the detail of its relationships, the social networks that have evolved on farms, the connections between past and present provide us with an understanding about how farmworker communities are held together. If we want to improve the lives of children in a sensitive and sustainable way, within the constraints of life on commercial farms, understanding the dynamics of these communities is crucial.

The children's testimonies are refreshing in other ways. They reveal a perspective with which we, as adults, are unfamiliar. In giving a voice to those who are usually spoken for by others it challenges us to question our assumptions. The chapter on work, for example, provides valuable insights on how some aspects of labour are particularly valued by children as an opportunity to learn, to participate in the world of adults, and to contribute to the family welfare that encourages the process of growing up. The chapter on concepts of the wider world reveals considerable wisdom and maturity on the part of children, particularly in their analysis of the hardships and deprivation of life in the larger towns and cities to which many of their older brothers and sisters have migrated.

Finally, this book is more about the perceptions, views and aspirations of children than an objective assessment of their situation on commercial farms. We make no apologies for this. The narratives that have resulted are subjective, anecdotal, partial and biased. But this has nothing to do with facts. Some critic might exclaim: 'How are we to use this to design a project or programme of intervention?' It is one of the contentions of this publication, however, that the way people remember or describe something tells us what is important about it, to them. Starting from where people are, including children, is the key to successful and participative development.

Endorsing the view that perceptions are as important as facts and that testimony collection provides a way to gain understanding of local priorities and aspirations, one author commented:

> *One key value of oral testimony in development is that it can amplify the voices of those whose economic, social and/or educational position has excluded them from the circles of influence and power. Many so-called "ordinary people"*

> *rarely have the opportunity to speak out and contribute to development decisions and change, yet often have much to offer based on first-hand experience of living and working in marginal environments.*[4]

We believe that this publication will be of considerable interest to development workers in local and international NGOs, government departments and community organizations. It should also appeal to the many individuals and organizations currently preoccupied with the issue of land reform in Zimbabwe and who may need to be reminded of the situation in which some two million farmworkers and their families currently reside. For organizations specifically involved with the realization of children's rights, we hope that providing a forum for young people to present their experiences and aspirations will prompt a much greater commitment to their participation in programmes elsewhere.

While based on a uniquely Zimbabwean situation, we also believe that this book will be of interest to readers outside the country. In the Southern African region, alone, commercial farm workers number several million, and countries like South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Mozambique and Zambia are seeking to tackle similar issues to those that confront Zimbabwe in this area.

But over and above the more specialized audiences indicated above, we also believe that the book will be of interest to a wider reading public, who wish to find out about the lives of children in communities which are too often hidden from popular attention. This, in turn, should create a more enabling environment for children in these locations, within which their rights to protection, survival, development and participation can be more adequately realized.

Chris McIvor

SCF Zimbabwe Programme Director

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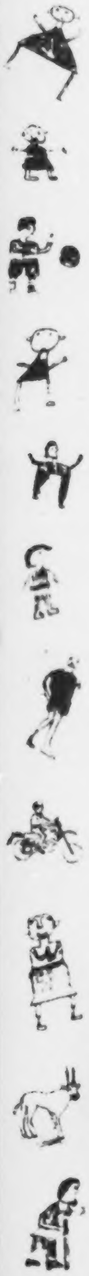
[4] Giving Voice. The Panos Institute. London. 1999. page 2



Wilson Ruzende, aged 13: My parents told me not to be jealous. If my father sees me stealing someone's ruler or pen, he beats me. He does not like me to play with thieves.

Tichaona Macheso, aged 16: A child has to be looked after nicely by her or his mother and not left alone. When the mother is working she can carry the child on her back or [have it] looked after by a domestic worker until the child will be able to play on his or her own. Then the child will be weaned and will be just concentrating on games until he or she goes to school.

Tichaona Chidzomba, aged 14: I want my parents to protect me from many diseases such as AIDS.

Watson Dzudza, aged 15: [What] I want my father and mother to do for me is to send me to school, buy some clothes for me ... and also to give me enough food. [I also want] them to like me.

Tichaona Mutopo, aged 14: When children are going to school, parents have to buy school uniforms, so that they can be smart and look like schoolchildren.

Tarisai Gibson, aged 16: Fathers and mothers are not supposed to drink beer, go to the beerhall or refuse to give food to children. When father goes to the beerhall his brain will be disturbed with the beer he would drink.

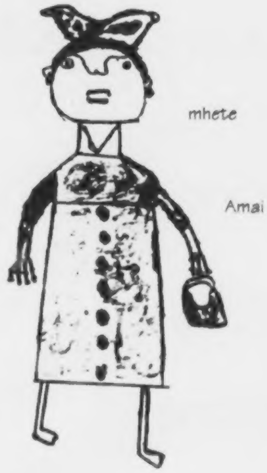
Kudakwashe Patrick, aged 13: To my parents I advise them to be self-controlled, [not to commit] adultery, and to be faithful.

Wittnes Zulu, aged 13: If I was a parent and have a family, I will tell them about nowadays life. ... I will tell them when I get old, 'I want you to look after me nicely because I was looking after you like an egg'.

Joseph Zameda, aged 15: Parents don't have to grumble at their children for silly mistakes, they don't have to give them hard household chores that they can't do, and they don't have to beat them for no reason.

Tichaona Chidzomba, aged 14: When I'm a parent, I will give my child many rules such as no smoking, no drinking, no

And how they perceive the parental role.



They have very clear ideas about how they would bring up their own children.

Tatenda Marisa, aged 12: A child is someone young who hasn't reached the age of eighteen. Someone is still young when they are playing with tins ... and who doesn't know things that are wanted by other people. He or she just wants to run and play.

Wilson Ruzende, aged 13: Being a child means you are still living in your father's and mother's house.

Luxmore Dimingu, aged 16: A child is someone who needs help from parents.

Wittnes Zulu, aged 13: A child is someone who is not mature who can't look after him or herself and is not able to work.

Kudakwashe Patrick, aged 13: A child is someone who has been born. It does not matter whether that person is older or younger ... even someone who walks with a stick has a father, so he or she will be a child.

Makomborero Magwa, aged 14: Even parents are passionate for us children to learn with hope. ... You hear your mother and father saying, 'My child, I want you to be a doctor or a teacher'. Our parents do not want to see us, their children, going to school without pens while they are working.

We asked them what
they expected of their parents.

Luxmore Dimingu, aged 16: Parents will give children rules so that they will grow up and learn to be self-controlled.

Cloud Kanyemba, aged 13: My parents command me to not be mischievous, not to drink beer, not to smoke *dagga*, not to walk alone at night, and to learn practical work. My parents stand up for me when I get into problems. They don't want me to go to school without eating. They also bought clothes and a school uniform for me.

Tatenda Marisa, aged 12: Rules are given by parents which we have to follow ... when you want to drink water, you will kneel down; when you want to eat, you clap your hands; when you are passing by elders, you will excuse yourself; when there are visitors, you will greet them; when you want to give your father water to drink, you will kneel down and give it to him. When I am a parent, I want my rules to be followed.

And yet the undaunted clarity and freshness of each child's perception and vision shines like a beacon; a light that will help us to understand and address the problems and difficulties that the children confront daily.

In this first chapter we simply asked them what the concept of childhood meant to them. And then we asked how they would bring up their own children. Their answers to these last questions reveal aspects of traditional morality, and new ideas synthesized through their own experience.

Lloyd Pakati, aged 13: ... We children go to the garden while elders are there ... I will be sent long distances while elders are there. But I'm still young, only thirteen years. And this makes us children unhappy and it is not good. They tell us to fetch water while they are there. We will be working and they don't. We are not allowed to go and play with friends. They will tell us to go and weed the field. And we are the ones who are suffering while they are just seated. If you want to go and watch a soccer match, you will be breaking rules. These are the problems of my life.

Mwada Ruwa, aged 13: A child is someone who starts as a baby, then walks on hands and knees. He or she will be a child who doesn't know many things and only knows the mother. A child needs to be cared for like an eagle's egg.

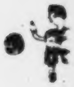
Fortunate Gyson, aged 12: A child is someone who has been born by someone else and who has parents. ... A child is someone until ... he or she has his or her own children.

Knowledge Mvango, aged 14: A child is not allowed to do things which are done by adults. Parents do not allow their children to be mischievous, to steal, to [commit] adultery, to drink beer, to smoke and to rush to be a parent when you are not educated. They want us to have good jobs. But us children, we don't listen, we rush for marriages.

Tichaona Chidzomba, aged 14: A child is a young person. If he or she wants anything his/her mother will give him. If he is ill her parents will go with her to the clinic. If his clothes are torn, his parents will buy new ones. When you are beaten by another, your parents will feel sad.

Mutizwa Kambakuku, aged 15: A child is someone young who is still going to school. Children need help, they are not yet working and they can't look after themselves, their parents look after them. Before they go to school, they have to eat suitable food; after school, they have to eat enough food.

Because children on farms assume responsibilities from a young age, experience many forms of hardship, and often marry or are married while they are still young teenagers, we asked them about their perceptions of childhood.



I am a child

'A child is precious and also a young person'
Cloud Kanyemba, aged 13

'A child needs to be cared for like an eagle's egg'
Mwada Ruwa, aged 13

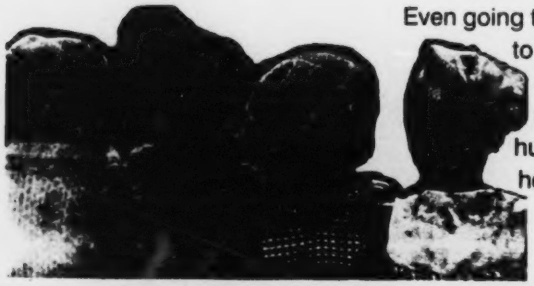
The highest salary a farm worker can earn, in the top grade, is Z$1 424 per month[1].

The average size of a family is six. Both parents have to work if they can. And children have either to work or are given responsibilities at home from a very early age.

The farmworking communities are isolated. The people who live there derive from a variety of different cultures and ethnic groups. They are often quite chauvinistic, conservative and authoritarian. Children do not often have a voice. This, of course, does not mean that they don't think, feel, and reflect on their experiences.

The children of farmworkers are a vulnerable group. Whether or not they will remain on one farm throughout their childhood, receive an education or have a future other than an early marriage, are choices over which they have virtually no control. Other than this, it is estimated that over 100 000 farm children will be orphaned through HIV and AIDS by the year 2000.

Even going to school is not usually achieved without hardship. Many children have to walk long distances to get there and back; many have to work on the farm during the holidays to earn money for pens, exercise books and a school uniform. Many lack concentration because they are tired and hungry when they arrive at school, especially if they have had to do housework before leaving home.



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[1] According to the most recent salary scale (1.9.99).

They reflect the behaviour and mores of the communities in which they are living.

drugs, to go to school every day, not to beat another child, not to steal, not to play bad games, not to play with water, not to eat the wrong kind of food, not to be robbed, [and to] listen to the teacher.

Dadirai John, aged 13: I don't want my child to be like other children who grow up in jail because of committing crimes which they can't pay for.

Blessed Chipere, aged 11: When I have a child, I don't want my child to have disturbances in life such as not going to school, being sick, being raped or to have their things stolen. These are some of the things which can disturb my child, so I want to look after my child nicely, so that thieves won't steal from her.

Dereck John, aged 16: A child is someone with good manners that can be admired by neighbours ... if someone visited you at home or at school, you have to greet them. ... If you see someone you don't know, you have to show respect to her or him, and if he or she is carrying something, you have to help.

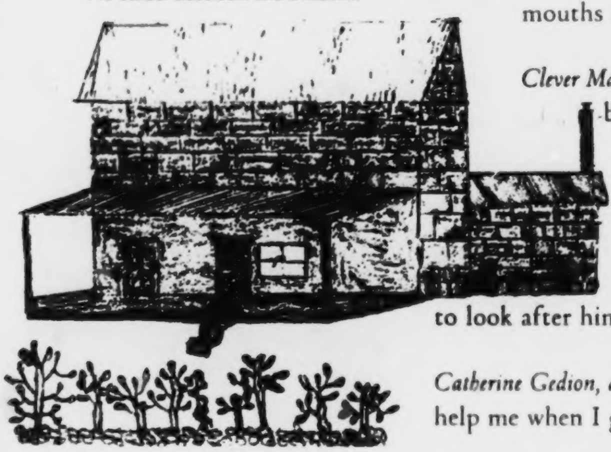
Education is very important.

Watson Dzudza, aged 15: If I were a father [my rules would be]: when I'm talking to you, you have to listen; when I send you somewhere, you have to run. You have to go to school every day. You have to do work you will be told to do. You don't have to be mischievous. You must not steal. You have to respect elders. You must greet people on the roads and help other people. That's what I would say if I were a father.

Tarisai Gibson, aged 16: ... a child should not wear mini-skirts or colour their mouths and nails.

Clever Maxan, aged 13: We have to show charity to our children by sending them to school ... and buying all school items for them.

Fanuel, aged 16: I want my child to be educated, and when I'm working I want to open my account so that I can save money ... I want to look after him or her, more than I'm being looked after.



Pre-school classroom and a kitchen.

Catherine Gedion, aged 12: I want my child to have knowledge so that he or she can help me when I get into problems.

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Taurai Yobe, aged 12: If I were a mother I would teach my son good manners. I will teach him things which will help him in future life. Things such as helping parents and not to be sexually active. Sons are supposed to be sent to school and I would like him to go so that he can know things happening in the country. If he doesn't go to school, he might be a thief.

Most sons don't obey their mothers. And mothers will be afraid to teach their sons because they will be afraid of being beaten.

Maidei Shakufa, aged 12: Some boy children behave well while others behave badly at home and at school. If I was a mother I would teach my boy only good manners. I would teach him to be a trustworthy person and to show respect to anyone who is older than him. I would teach him not to steal because he might end up in prison. I would teach him to be a generous person. And I would teach my child about worshipping God so that he can live well in his life. I would teach my son many good things.

Rosa

Lizzy Robson, aged 14: I would teach my boy child not to play with girls because they can get pregnant. He should not drink beer or take drugs. He should listen to what his parents tell or teach him and he should learn to be respectful to elders. Although he will become older and marry a wife, he should also listen to his parents. He should not go to discos or nightclubs because there are bad activities that happen there.

At school he should do well in class. My child should help by doing some work at home and not sit basking in the sun. If he doesn't obey my rules, I would chase him away because he is rude.

When he marries, he should find a better woman, not a cruel one. His wife should respect him as her husband and he should respect her because she monitors the house. My boy should feed his wife's relatives. I would teach my boy to be a happy helpful father.

Agnes Parimwa, aged 15: I would like a boy child better than a girl child because she will get married and go. A boy child can look after me and he can do a lot of work at home. I will teach him to help poor people. I want him to marry a wife with good manners who is educated and who likes God's word. And I want him to teach his own children the same manners as we have. I [will] have looked after him and I don't want him to turn his back against me tomorrow. I don't want the world to laugh at my boy child.

Lydia Abeck, aged 13: I would teach my son not to steal, not to use immoral language, not to be a prostitute and to respect elders. I don't want him to get someone's daughter pregnant. If the girl is thrown out of the house by her parents ... the girl will come to my home and my son might commit suicide because of being afraid.

I don't want my son to steal because it can damage his brain and he will end up in jail. Even relatives won't like my son because they will be afraid that he might steal from them.

And I don't want him to use immoral language ... because you won't live nicely with others. That is when you will end up being a thief or an orphan.

Trevor Ngwenya, aged 12: If I was a father, I would teach my girl child to obey my rules. She should respect elders and her friends too. I would like to see her perform in any sporting activity and work hard at school. ... She should not wear mini-skirts or trousers [but] dresses and long skirts. I will encourge her not to drink alcohol and take drugs like cocaine, mbanje, mandrax and caffeine. If I see her with boyfriends, I will tell her to leave them alone and continue with education. When she finishes, she should seek a job, a better job like being a pilot. Then she can get married and look after her own family.

Steria Sipiriano, aged 13: If I were a father I would teach my daughter good things only because her future is unknown. I will teach her many things because when she is grown up, she won't follow them all. The most important thing is not to walk at night because people are now cruel and some are rapists. Even going to a beerhall is now dangerous because that's where prostitutes are now coming from. ... Daughters have to listen to their parents. Even if their mouth is twisted, they have to be taught. Everyone is proud of his or her daughter in everything she does. It is important in all countries to teach girl children.

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My child must have good manners and be well behaved when visiting others.

They are not supposed to use bad language to elders but must greet them properly.

My child must be educated. I want my child to grow up with enough knowledge.

They must respect their teachers.

They must not refuse to go to school and they must not be lazy at school.

My child must not fight or steal or play with thieves.

They must not ask for money from other people but must help the poor.

My family must love others.

I, as a father, must have good manners. I must not use immoral language.

I am not supposed to get mad when someone have done something bad to me.

When my child has a fight, I must not beat the child but listen to what he has to say.

When my child visits relatives, he must listen to what they have to say and greet them nicely.

My child must be smart all the time.

My family must not play in or drink dirty water.

My family must have enough food.

I don't want my children to play at night or my boys to play with girls.

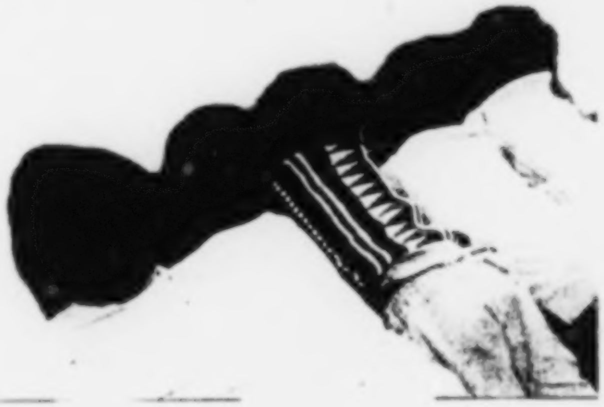
I don't want my child to go to the beerhalls because they will not concentrate on their school work.

If I saw [my daughter] standing one day with a boy, I will beat her with a belt, so that she can stop her doings. My child is not supposed to play with someone of the opposite sex.

My child must respect their parents.

My family is not supposed to disobey my rules.

A grade four class drew up a list of rules that they would have children and parents follow.



Our families

'Truly speaking, my friends, life at the farm is not very easy.'
Simbai Chaparira, aged 13

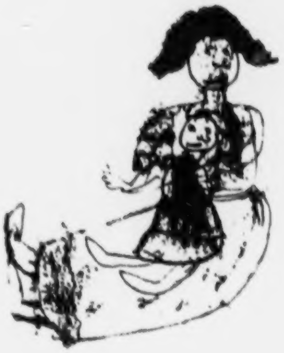
In this chapter we look at what farmworkers' children have told us about their day-to-day lives. Poverty is the root, but not the only, cause of many of the problems and much of the suffering that the children experience. It is clear that until the cycle of poverty and ignorance is broken, the problems, and the difficulties which give rise to them, will remain.

Many children come from broken homes. There are many reasons for this: people 'marry' or have relationships followed by children when they are themselves very young. They do so because if they have little or no education, and are not meaningfully employed, 'marriage', particularly for girls, appears to give them a status in the community. It is often the only alternative to staying at home, doing the housework, and living in cramped quarters. Moreover, single mothers can rarely be supported by their own families. Culturally it is shameful to be unmarried and pregnant. There are few, if any, recreational activities in which adolescents can participate; there are few alternative role models to which they can aspire, and adolescents have little or no access to information about family planning.

Another reason for the cycle of deprivation is that many children come from large families that find it difficult to support themselves, although it is assumed that additional children will help the family financially by working in the home and in the fields. Economic pressures, tension over family priorities, cramped living conditions, a shortage of food, etc. all give rise to marital breakdown.

Many farmworkers are itinerant because they are casual labourers, or because they are constantly seeking better conditions of employment, so children follow their parents (or a parent) from farm to farm; but they also move to stay with relatives, or between a farm and a rural area. Such moves disturb their education, if they are attending school, and often the ages of children at farm schools are higher than the norm.

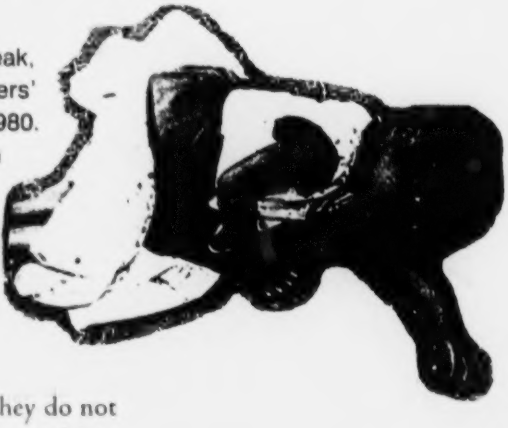
Gender discrimination is also a factor which puts girls at a particular disadvantage. They are the first to be given responsibilities in the home; the first to drop out of school; the first to be penalized should they become pregnant; and the first to be pressured into marriage, although some of these factors make them feel that marriage is a positive option as they believe it will give them certain freedoms, and a married woman with a child does acquire a certain status in the community.



Two other significant factors that have a negative effect on children's lives, are the loss of a parent or parents, not through divorce but through death. The rapid spread of the AIDS virus has made this increasingly common. Orphaned children on farms are often left without any means of support, although several organizations are now seeking to respond to this problem.

Children, particularly those born of parents or grandparents who were not from Zimbabwe, or who are illiterate, do not have birth certificates. Without the latter they cannot apply for any form of state support as they are considered foreigners although Zimbabwe is signatory to the declaration[1] which states that 'The child shall be entitled from his/her birth to a name and a nationality'.

While, however, the situation of many children living on farms is bleak, much has been done through Save the Children's Farmworkers' Programme which began shortly after Zimbabwe's independence in 1980. Today, there is an increasing awareness not only in the farm communities, but among farmers, of initiatives that must be taken if the lives of children on farms are to be improved. The children's comments disclose their awareness of the issues which need to be addressed in order to break the cycles of deprivation and ignorance, and to provide farm communities with some more meaningful autonomy over their lives.



Poverty is the root cause of many problems in families. This is the experience of children; one which they recognize, while being able to do little or nothing to alleviate it.

Castern Bvuma, aged 10: In my family everyone is always unhappy. ... They do not buy clothes for us. They just have cow skins for us to wear at home and buy only a pair of clothes when we will be going to school. These are my problems in life.

Zivai Robson, aged 12: Life at the farm is tough. People are not well paid. They earn very little. The farm owners don't know that they under-pay their workers.

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[1] Principle 3 of the The United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child also states that 'The child shall have the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents.'

Nevertheless children look at their lives with a lack of sentiment and self-pity.

Kudakwashe Mutasa, aged 13: It's very hard to work at a farm. People do not rest. ... [They] work very hard but they are not paid enough money.

Maxwell Mwale, aged 13: The money father earned ... is shared with his three wives. All the wives are looking for that money, and the food price increases. Sadza is now eaten [only] in the evening, because he lended money from friends for the school fees.

Jephias Makaya, aged 15: Most of the people who work at the farm they survive on borrowing money.

Lloyd Pakati, aged 13: The problems in my life are that our living conditions are not good. We are always sad. And I wonder what I have done wrong.

Ronica, aged 16: I am looking forward to so many things in life. But there are so many things that can disturb us farm children. Some children of my age have already got married. Some are working to help themselves. Our parents earn very little wages. The money is not enough to look after their families and for us to go to secondary schools. In my memories I wish to have a better future.

Gift Watch, aged 12: Some children put on nice clothes but the children of farm workers wear patched clothes. Clothes are very expensive and we cannot afford to buy them.

Poverty and family size

Children often come from large families. Farmworkers often have several wives. It is a struggle to maintain the family.

Tongogara Vinge, aged 16: In my family we are eight. We are too many … so we just wish God will look after us, so that we can finish our education. My father is the only one who works in the family. He cannot afford to pay school fees, food and clothes. … This type of problem can influence parents to throw their children in bins. Because food will not be enough to feed them all.

Maxwell Mwale, aged 13: In my family we are twelve children. My father has three wives. ... I am worrying to be sent to secondary school. I am not worrying about food.

Deprivation often affects the children in their day-to-day lives; anxiety forms part of their experience of childhood.

Memory Korro, aged 10: My mother died in 1992. My stepmother has her own children. ... She doesn't have children with my father. She has two children with another man. They are not young. They have their own children. My stepmother is the fourth wife and we are seven in our family. My mother was the second wife. We don't know [what happened to the first wife]. My father just got her pregnant but they did not stay together. She only has my father's daughter.

Anna Malunga, aged 14: I want to have five children because ... your children might get sick and die.

Cloud John More, aged 15: I want to grow up fast so that I want to have children, so that if I get sick they will look after me.

Mutizwa Kambakuku, aged 15: When I get old so that I can't work, my children will look after me.

Cloud Kanyemba, aged 13: A child is precious because he or she can help you with future problems.

Norman Mudonbi, aged 15: Some of the children from the farms don't want to go to school. They want to work because they know their parents cannot afford to pay school fees. They will be helping their parents.

Rwisai Maposa, aged 14: We are seven in our family, five girls and two boys ... I want two children when I grow up. I want a boy and a girl. ... The girl will be called Edith and the boy will be called Dott.

Katembbeni Kazhembe, aged 16: We are ten in our family. I want to get married at the age of thirty years. I want to have two children.

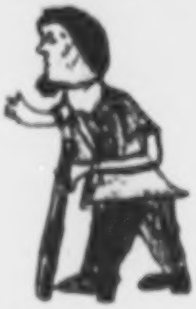
Memory Bulaundi, aged 12: Nowadays living conditions are hard and I want to have two children. Things are now expensive and if you have many children, you won't be able to look after them.*

Norest Chizodga, aged 13: When I grow up I want to have two boys. I will call them Nhamo and Lyoid. I want only boys because when I get old they can look after me. Girls will get married and their husbands will not look after me. I can't go and stay with my son-in-law.

Okay Rangarirai, aged 16: I want to have only two children because life is becoming so hard. If you have many children, other people's children will be living happily, and yours will not.

January Dzikoma, aged 12: I want to get married when I have finished my education courses or at the age of 26. Our teacher always tells us not to get

For some parents, children are understood to be a way of securing their livelihood in old age.



Moreover, children can supplement the family's income through working.

A new generation

With education and better health care, many children only want smaller families.

They want their children to have better lives.

married too early because you won't be able to handle a home. ... And you won't be able to look after your family. You might not have finished school and you might find life hard. You won't be able to dress your children properly and you won't give them enough food. And your children end up being street kids.

Becha Basullie, aged 15: When I grow up I want to have two children, a boy and a girl. I will try my best for my children to go to school ... and if I don't have money to send them to school, I won't dump them, because I will have wanted them. And I will look after my children, buying them clothes, food and other things needed in life. My children will have good manners, respect elders and they will relate well with others.

Rwisai Maposa, aged 14: I wake up at around six o'clock. Then I wash the dishes, make fire, make tea, eat porridge, take a bath. After taking a bath I dress myself and leave for school. I will be late sometimes because I will be tired and so I don't run ...

Netsai, aged 11: After school I fetch water from the borehole, wash the dishes, sweep the house, take a bath. [and then] ... I go to the fields and ... help my grandmother look for herbs in the forest.

Castern Nyandoro, aged 10: When I come from school, I do all the chores. Before finishing the chores, they will send me to water the gardens. After watering they will send me to go to look for firewood, a long distance. I'm still young, I am only ten years of age. I fetch bathing water for elders whilst they are there. We, the children, do the cultivation, the elders do not. We do not eat when we come from school.

Taurai Yobe, aged 12: One day, on a Saturday morning, after I finished washing plates, my mother ... wanted to send me to the shops with my sister. My sister refused to go. So I went alone. My mother gave me $100 to buy clothes, food and many other things. I took my shopping bag, so that I will use it after shopping. The shops were packed up with many people because it was [the] month-end. When I was just near the till operator I checked my pockets to find if I had money. Unfortunately there was nothing in my pocket. The money that I lost was the only money which my father had from his pay. My heart started beating as if it was going to break. On my way back home I checked the whole way for the money, but

Domestic labour

Children all have household and family duties from a very early age.

A lack of adult supervision and support results in mishaps for which the children take the blame.

I could not find it. The time I went back home my mother was not at home. She had gone to fetch water. When she came back my mouth was swollen to the nose. The two of us could not speak to each other. My sister told my mother what had happened. For the first time my mother badly beat me. This incident really pained me so much, since getting money at the farm is a problem. No one was interested in me that day. The whole month we survived through begging. My father tried to borrow from his boss but he refused. From that day I handle money with care. My parents learnt a lesson. They no longer send me to the shops with a large amount of money.

Falisters Munyeri, aged 10: The first-born is a girl. She is thirteen years old. She is at home. When I left her she was doing the laundry.

Vengai Karandura, aged 11: My sister Beauty does the household chores. I wash dishes, clean the house, fetch water, look for firewood, and cook vegetables from the garden.

Leonard Choffat, aged 15: I help my mother in the field. My sister helps her wash dishes, do the laundry, fetch water, and look for firewood. ... Girls are the ones who are supposed to wash dishes.

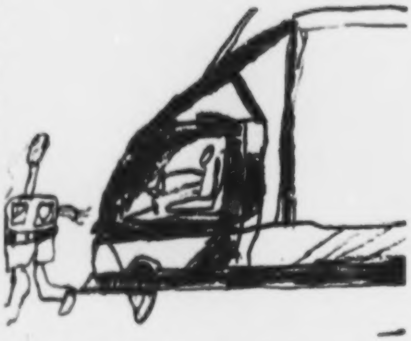
Q. Who told you that girls are the ones who are supposed to wash the dishes?

A. My father.

Zendani Zinge, aged 11: Dishes are not supposed to be washed by boys, but by girls. Girls are not supposed to weed in the fields.

Shainai Govera, aged 13: During the holiday I was working in the morning every day. I was washing some plates [and] fetching water. I was waking up [and] sometimes sweeping floors. I was sometimes getting my friends and going to fetch some firewood in the bush. During the weekend, with my friend, we could go to visit other places, or spend the whole day playing netball. I could sometimes get my reading books, reading until it is time to cook some food.

Agnes Gomani, aged 15: I stayed at home not going to school for three years. In my heart I was very worried ... what caused it was that in my family we are six, and the elder ones were the ones that were expected to go to school. ... Not having enough money was the cause that we were left not going to school. After some months and years my parents saw that they were playing with time. Then the elder ones



'I was coming home from the store and ... the car hit me. I didn't see that day very well ...' (Hazvinei Joramy, aged 12)

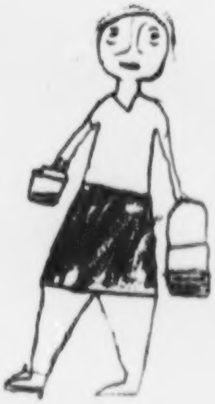
Domestic work and gender

The division of labour tends to be along gender lines with girls doing more work in the house and boys going out to look for firewood, etc. But this pattern is not fixed; much will depend on the size and wealth of the family, and who is the head of the household.

It is, however, the girls who most frequently stay at home to look after younger siblings, rather than attending school.

were told that those who have finished grade seven can stop going to school and look after the babies as the younger ones used to do. ... this shows that being poor is not good.

Holiday diary



Christine Vintura, aged 14: Diary 1998/99

Date 04/12/98

Today is Friday. I woke up at 6 a.m. and I swept the household and yard. I fetched water. After that I cooked our breakfast. Before I ate my breakfast, I was sent by mother to go to my aunty's house. When I came back I ate my food at 9 a.m. [then I] washed plates for breakfast, sat down on a chair and started to read a book called *Crossing the Boundary Fence*. My baby brother was ill so that I went to the *veld* where his mother was working. His body temperature was hot. When I came back, I went to my aunt's house. I helped her to wash all the plates. I swept the kitchen and fetched water for her. [Then] I collected the firewood. I put a tin on the fire. I cooked our lunch at 12.30 p.m. I ate my lunch at 1 p.m.

Afternoon

I helped my mother to wash clothes. I washed our plates at 2 p.m. When I finished washing I went for a walk with my brother to find *mazhanje* and *hute*.

Evening

I came back home at 5 p.m. The rain started. I can't find *mazhanje*. When it is raining I remain indoors. I washed my body and my body was cold. I was sent by my sister to [buy] some tomatoes. After that I ate my supper at 7.45 p.m. I started to read a book again called *Crossing the Boundary Fence*. I started to read at 8.10 p.m. up to 8.30 p.m. I went with mother to see some visitors. I came back home. I prayed to the Lord. I slept at 9.02 p.m.

Date 05/12/98

Today is Saturday. I woke up and folded my blankets. I swept the yard and the household. I washed plates. After that I washed my face. I was sent by my mother to [go] to my aunt's house to borrow an umbrella. I cooked breakfast at 8 a.m. My father wanted me to go with his breakfast [to the fields] at 8.50 a.m. I ate my breakfast at 10.05 ... then I fetched water. After that I collected the firewood and put a pot on the fire.

Afternoon

I put a tin [on the fire] at 12. I cooked my lunch. I ate my lunch at 12.50. I washed plates. I went to the river and washed my body. I washed my clothes at 3.05 p.m. I finished at 3.45. I fetched water and washed my brother. I went with *Grace* to find *hute*. When I

came back I got in the house and I heard a knock outside. I saw a visitor and I was very happy. I gave him water to drink. After that I cooked lunch for him. I swept in the kitchen.

Evening

I helped my mother to carry a dish of clothes. I helped Last to wash plates and to put firewood in the kitchen. At 5.58 p.m. I put a tin on the fire. I ate my supper at 7 p.m. I went to bed at 7.55 p.m. [Then I was] sent by mother to go to my aunt's house to give her flour and money. I started to read a book, the story of Musa and Diana in *Crossing the Boundary Fence*. I prayed to the Lord. I was enjoying my lesson of reading. I slept at 8.30 p.m.

Date 06/12/98

Today is Sunday. I washed my plates and fetched water. After that I swept one room and mopped the floor. I cleaned the window with soap and a piece of cloth. I ate my breakfast at 9.30 a.m. I washed some plates. I cooked lunch at 12.30 p.m. I washed my plate

Vengai Karandura, aged 11: I think it is not good to move from one farm to the other because we might be living well on one farm, and when we move we might have problems. …And at Kachara there were buses and here there are no buses.

Edith Musomva, aged 12: If you want to stay on the farm, first of all you have to find a rural area, because if you have been fired from work, you can go to the rural areas.

Loveness Julius, aged 11: There are many people who move from one farm to another. Some people go to live far away. We first stay in Mhangura. We were not staying nicely and [were] not free at Mhangura because we used to stay with another man and his wife. His wife didn't want us to stay there just because we used to cook together with her. So we leave there and go to Wiro. At Wiro we lived nicely. My mother used to sweep and cook for the whiteman. She was the housemaid. My brother used to stay at Wiro. He was a car driver. But there was a man called Chimutuwa. He was cruel. … [Then] people were fired. My father and Chimutuwa were also fired. That's when we got to this farm.

Ernest Nyandoro, aged 13: We used to stay in Concession on a farm. I wasn't happy when we left that farm because it was caused by a man who have lied that my father had stolen maize and combines, and then he was sent to jail. I was desperate to hear that my father's work was over. And I was bored because it was exciting in Concession. And school fees weren't hard to find, but here it is hard to find. If I

Families and instability

Many farmworkers' children experience considerable instability, not least because their fathers or mothers are casual labourers. This means the children follow their parents from one farm to another.

Often, out of poverty and necessity, people will be prompted to move between the rural areas and the towns, or vice versa, especially if relatives are able to help them with accommodation, work, schooling, care of a child, etc.

were my father I wouldn't have left. I would have begged the whiteman to [let us] stay. Nothing makes me happy here because people shout at each other, and relish and mealie-meal are not easily found. I think it is better for us to go back to Concession.

Muchaneta Tsoka, aged 13: So far we have lived on two farms. We left Domboshawa because my grandfather had stolen strawberries at night and the whiteman had asked us to leave his farm. That's when we came here. [In between] Sophia [a sister] and I went to stay in the rural areas in Mutoko in 1996. ... [Now] my mother has told me that we have to leave here and go to another farm because that's where she is working.

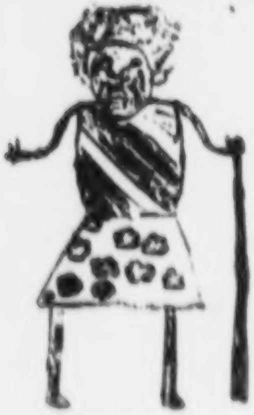
Kudakwashe Njanji, aged 13: I stayed on many different farms. I stayed in Bulawayo with my father. We moved from Bulawayo when my father was no longer working there. From Bulawayo we went to stay with my aunt's husband. We stayed for about two years suffering. I used to go to school without food, shoes or jersey. ... [Then] my father was seriously ill during the Christmas holidays. He went to hospital. My mother decided to go and stay at my sister's farm. She used to travel from Gada to the farm every evening. … Then my father got a job and he moved back to Bulawayo.

Sheilla Shuvha, aged 12: ... What I don't like about moving from one farm to another is that I'm not going forward with school as I should have done.

Mildred Malili, aged 12: I was born in 1986 in a family of nine. We were happy ... [then] father died on 4th May 1987 ... in our family, life was going harder. My brother started to work at ZESA in 1990, but my mother was not working. So my brother decides to take my mother to the rural areas. My sister decides to go and look for work. ... My grandmother decides to come and take me where she was living. ... Until now my family are suffering from not having enough parents to look after us.

Gilbert Barisa, aged 16: I used to stay in Plumtree with my mother and my father. When they got divorced we came to stay at a farm with my uncle. Mother got married to another man but father died. Then my uncle left work and went to another farm. The schools were far away. That's when I came to stay with my grandmother at this farm. [She] does not work, she is given food by my uncle. The food is not enough because he has another family he looks after, and he can't

As a consequence, children are very often sent to stay with relatives.



My grandmother

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do all the things that we want. Two elder brothers of mine stay with my aunt in Plumtree, and two other younger brothers stay with my mother in the rural areas.

Grace Njanji, aged 10: We are five [in the family]. I am the fourth born. I stay with my mother's elder sister. My mother is staying in the rurals and my father is in Glendale because they are divorced. One of my brothers is in Mount Darwin. He is managing my father's farm. My other brother is in the rural areas, he is cultivating, and he is staying with grandmother in Gweshe. One sister is married in Cashel. The other one is staying with her grandmother in Chiriseri. ... I think staying without my parents is not good because my mother's sister might shout at me, and I wish I was staying with my mother.

Manyara Undi, aged 12: My father works at the farm in the field. Last year he was a policeman. My father has a big problem because now he is paid small money. He wants the children to go to school.

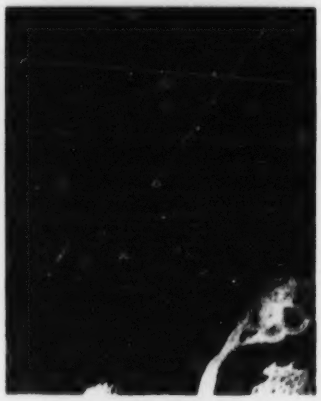
Chenjerai Gibbon, aged 14: My father left work in Harare. He was a soldier. I was in grade one. I stopped going to school for a year. Then he got a job at the farm and I started going to school, and my grandmother was paying my fees.

Memory Zimbire, aged 15: I stay with my mother's mother. ... My mother has been married with another man and she stays in the Mount Darwin area. ... The problem I have at home is of working all the time ... and also my grandfather, my grandmother's husband and me, we don't stay nicely together ... if they want a child to be sent anywhere, they just send me ... I have a father but they say he has to pay money, so that he can take me. The wife he has doesn't want him to pay the money

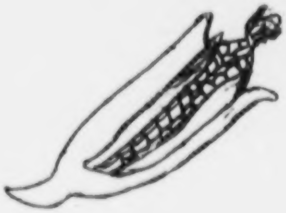
Tawadzwa Nyakunda, aged 11: In our family we are taught good manners, not to fight and not to steal. If something is wrong in our family and the father says: 'You are not going to eat today,' for sure you don't eat that day, because he is the head of the family.

Okay Rangarirai, aged 16: My grandmother has taught me good manners [such as] respecting elders and to watch my tongue when talking. ... She is saying that you have to work hard in order to succeed.

Rosemary Mutize, aged 16: My grandmother taught me good manners and how to

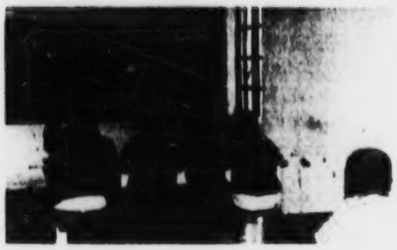


Often they will be made to work to earn their keep.



Family morality

In many families there are strict codes of morality, which the children accept and in which they believe, despite their hardships.



find good friends in life. And not those who spoil you by doing bad things. [She] told me her life story since she was a girl until she was married; she told me that I have to follow all those things. She told me to be a good girl.

Fortunate William, aged 12: In our family we don't like people who talk bad language and steal.

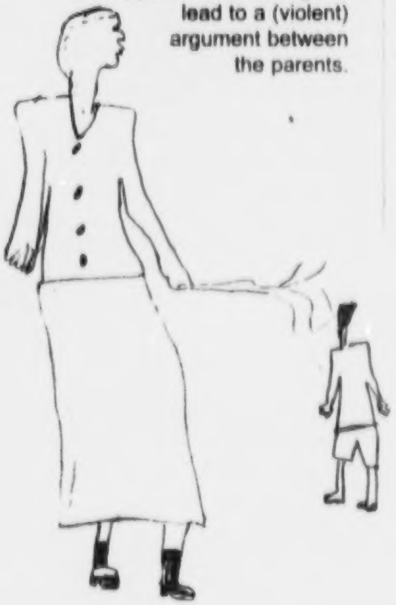
Kevin Kuwandika, aged 11: My family do not like someone who steals. My mother tells us not to fight. My family like someone who respects others and obeys rules. My mother also tells us that if you take someone's things which do not belong to you, you must tell him or her. My mother tells us not to scold others.

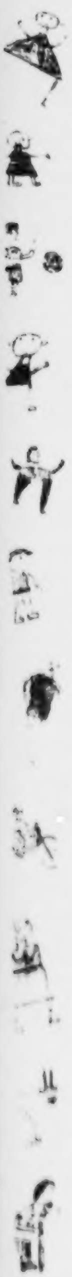
Makanyara Marsellesa, aged 11: Rules of my family[are]: Don't eat food which you are not given. Don't play with boys. Don't play with friends that tell us bad news. Don't stand outside this house. Tell good news to your friends. Listen to your teacher in the classroom. Listen to your parents and your brothers and sisters.

Charles Wellington, aged 12: When I was beaten, I had stolen some sugar. [My mother] wasn't told, she saw me. She asked me where I got the sugar from and I didn't know what to say. She took a belt and said, 'Tell me where you have got the sugar from?' And I didn't answer. She became very angry and started beating me. I started crying with a loud voice saying, 'Stop beating me and I will tell you.' And she stopped. And she had beaten me five times. And she said, 'Tell me!' and I didn't tell her. Then she started teasing me saying that I have a big head, fat like a large water rat. And I laughed and she said you are laughing like a child without manners. Then she beat me and beat me until I told her that I have stolen some sugar. Then she left. My friends then came and laughed at me. My mother then made a fire and made some tea and she gave me tea and told me to finish it all. Then she prepared porridge and I thought it was for someone else. Then she told me to eat all the porridge and if I couldn't finish it, she was going to beat me again, and she said, 'You won't have anything to eat in the afternoon and the evening.' I ate the porridge but I couldn't finish it. So when she moved away, I threw away the porridge. When she came back she said, 'You child! You eat too much!' And she said, 'Don't steal again because it is not good. If you are hungry, you will tell me. You will not steal!' After explaining this, she sent me to the shops. Starting from there I didn't do anything without being told.

Family discipline

Discipline is often very strictly and physically enforced: poverty, family tensions, stress, educational deprivation among parents give rise to comparatively harsh retribution. Sometimes another member of the family will intercede on behalf of the child. It can also happen that a beating will lead to a (violent) argument between the parents.

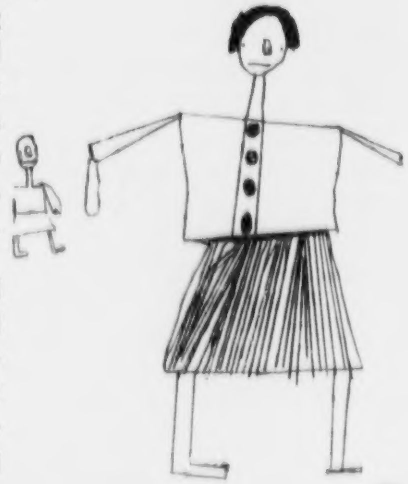




Fungai Chanza, aged 11: I was beaten by my father when I hit the baby. He used a gum tree stick and I cried a lot as if my neck was going to be cut off. I refused to eat sadza and my father cajoled me with bread and a soft drink. Mother said, 'You are mad. Why did you hit the baby as if you were beating your own child. If you do it again, I will beat you thoroughly.' My mother kept on grumbling at me and I started crying and vomiting. My young brother noticed that and he went to tell mother, 'Fungai is vomiting. He is sitting behind the house.' When my mother arrived, she questioned me and I didn't answer. My father got angry and they started arguing with each other. Later they were fighting. From that day I knew it was no good to be mischievous.

Children grow up knowing and fearing punishment. It is something they live with and may not easily forget.

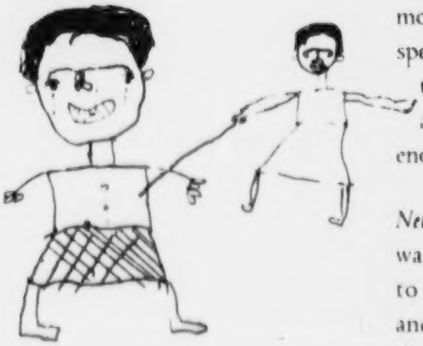
Owen Piano, aged 10: I have stolen meat which was cooked in the pot. I have stolen the meat because I was too hungry. ... My mother saw me eating it. I was sitting by the kitchen door. When I saw her, I couldn't run away, and she caught me and beat me a lot. After I was beaten my father arrived and my mother told him [what I had done]. He became very angry and beat me. Then I ran away to my aunt's home. But my aunt sent me back home and my father beat me again. Then I ran away to my uncle's home, and I told him what had happened. My uncle then took me home. He complained to my parents, and they did not beat me again that day.



'She beat me with a long stick and it broke.'

Nyarai Bonda, aged 10: The day when my mother beat me was on Wednesday. I had broken a plate. I was beaten at home in the afternoon. My father grumbled and my mother stopped beating me. Then she bought another plate. But she told me that it wasn't over, and after a while she started shouting at me. And if I responded she pinched my ears, saying, 'Why don't you listen to me?' I told her that I am going to tell grandfather. Then I went to my grandfather's home, and he took me back. He asked my mother why she had beaten me. He said, 'Do you want to kill my only grandchild? I am going to ask her aunt if there is no child who makes mistakes.' When my aunt heard she came, panting, saying, 'I want to see her.' [The mother] she was shouting, saying, 'What kind of a woman are you? Do you think a child is the stump of a tree which can't talk? Answer me if you don't think I am also going to beat you with a batter stick.' My father responded saying, 'Your sister-in-law has heard what you have said?' My aunt then went back to her home.

Sarah Vudenga, aged 10: I was sent to go and give grandfather money and I lost the money. I didn't know that I had lost the money. When I reached my grandfather's home, I gave



him two dollars. He asked me where the other money was. I looked in my pocket but there wasn't any money. I went back home and told my mother that I have lost the money. She started complaining, saying, 'Tell me the truth. You are lying. You want to spend my money at school.' She said: 'You are not going to eat sadza today,' and started to beat me. I cried and ran away, going to my aunt's home. My mother followed me and started to beat me again. Then my grandmother came and said, 'It's finished. It's enough.' And my mother said, 'wash the dishes, if you don't want me to beat you again.'

Netsai Magaso, aged 9: It was on Saturday when I was beaten in December 1988. I was beaten because I was playing *nhodo* with my friends. ... My mother wanted me to do many chores such as fetching water, washing dishes and cleaning the house and I didn't do anything. She had left me with a young child and I wasn't able to do anything. The child was too annoying and that is why I didn't do the household chores. My father wasn't there, he was at work. I was beaten many times. I was like the beam of a gum tree. When she came to beat me, I didn't see her because I was busy playing. After being beaten I went home crying. I have done all the chores crying. Then I took a bath and warmed my mother's water. Then I ate the sadza that my mother had refused to give me before. Then I went to bed.

Marriage and relationships

Child 'marriages' are not infrequent.

Norman Mudonhi, aged 15: Some girls don't like to go to school because they want to get married. Girls get married because they see that their parents cannot afford to look after them.

Shushai Chikukutu, aged 10: I am a girl aged ten years. I can go to school but I don't think that I will go ahead. I do all the housework while my parents are at work. I have got good health. The problem which I have is that of getting married very early. I was thinking that the problems will improve, unfortunately they are not.

It worries me to have a baby at my age. It's hard to look after the baby. I don't want to suffer the way some of my relatives did.

Girls are often married at a very young age. One of several reasons is that they often have no other future. Their families cannot afford to maintain them unless they work.

Rosemary Mutize, aged 16: Some parents do not care if their children are not going to school. They have a problem of saying they [the girls] will get married and we will have lots of money. Some parents just let their children do whatever they feel like doing if they are not going to school. ... I feel sorry for those parents who do not let their girl children go to school. Especially those girls who do not go to school are not respected and do not have good manners. ... As I see it, there are some children who get married below the age of seventeen; some girls have four boyfriends; and, having no parents causes some children to marry or get married while they are still very young.

Gracious Chipfunde, aged 15: I know a girl she is thinking right now it would be better if she wasn't married. She is always beaten by her husband, saying, 'You are a fool. If I had known, I wouldn't have married you.' The reasons that caused her to get married are that she didn't like school. They were poor in their family. Her parents are old and she used to laugh at them. Right now she is a mother because of wanting to get married.

Selina Simon, aged 14: My sister got pregnant when she was young. Her boyfriend lied to her that when we are together you won't struggle as you are doing at your home. You will eat what you want until you are too fat. If you marry me you will drink tea with milk every day and bread with eggs. My sister agreed, and they stayed together. My sister is called Fungai, she was learning here at this school ... My sister was married at the age of thirteen. Right now she has a child called Cloud who is walking and he can say 'mama' and 'baba' and even 'tete', but [my sister's] husband lied to her that, if you marry me you will get fat, ... now she is thin.

Jane Zhoyo, aged 12: My sister was told, 'You won't get pregnant.' She was given money and sweet things. She gets pregnant and gave birth to a baby girl. ... She gave the baby to the father. He takes the baby in the morning and brings her in the afternoon for her to be breastfed. Now the baby is crawling. My brother-in-law then came with someone. My mother then welcomed them. They paid too much money, cloth and a blanket. There was a party at our home – people celebrating my sister's *lobola*. That's when she and her husband went together to their home happily.

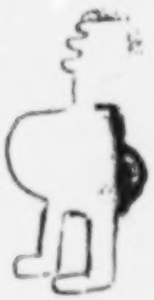
Rwisai Maposa, aged 14: Getting married too early will stop me from going to secondary school. There are boys [at school] who make girls unhappy. They want girls to love them and they don't want to. I think these boys have to be punished by the headmaster.

Ben Chaduma, aged 15: My sister was impregnated when she was very young. Her name is Muchaneta. [She] was fooled by her boyfriend that if she drinks Surf she was not going to be pregnant. She tried several times but it did not work. She was impregnated when she was fifteen years of age. Her boyfriend refused to marry her. She delivered a child when she was sixteen years. I looked after her child from birth up to now. She is now eight years. The child is called Sarudzai. She is doing grade one. Muchaneta is now twenty-two years. From the time Muchaneta got cheated by her boyfriend no one want to marry her. Sarudzai can now write.

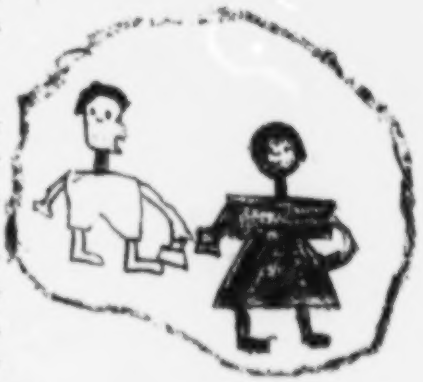
Stella Mufarini, aged 15: My sister's boyfriend lied to her that he wanted to marry her. She gets pregnant and he ran away. My sister didn't know what to say to my

Marriage can appear a very positive option.

Or they marry because they become pregnant.



Teenage boys and young male adults put a lot of pressure on girls to have sex, and when they become pregnant they often desert them.



Immature girls do not have a great deal of choice and are often not able to assert themselves in a hierarchical, paternalistic, poor society with few role models and few options.

mother. When she gave birth to her child, she was struggling. Her child didn't have clothes. Even now her child has grown up struggling a lot.

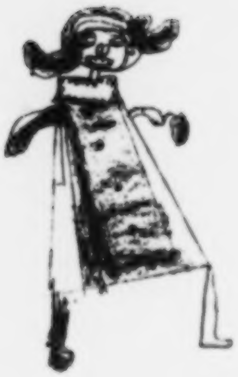
Ingidzai Mupabuza, aged 15: I know a child who got pregnant while she was still young ... the problem was that the baby didn't have anyone to look after him properly ... the daughter then got pregnant again ... the first reason was that she used to play with older men; secondly, the girl didn't have a mother, she stayed with her father and stepmother and they didn't look after her nicely.

Michael Mujaji, aged 13: A young girl in our village became pregnant. She was only ten years old ... the man was a friend of prostitutes ... he was called the father of all ... he was thirty years old ... when the women he gets pregnant have their babies, they cry a lot ... if the man was still alive, he would have sore hands because of clapping to all his mothers-in-law ...

Chengetai Bandera, aged 16: I hate someone who proposes love to me. His name is Tenda. I don't want to see him in my eyes. Whenever I see him I think of my father and mother. I wanted to report him to the people whom I stay with, but my heart resisted and said leave him. He sent someone with the letter proposing love, but I did not reply to him. I shouted at him. I don't know what to do about this. He is not one person who did this. I cannot even count them. Some of them are fathers.

Edward Chanza, aged 14: I have a sister who is after me. She is called Rodha. My sister was told to take pills. She did it to get rid of her pregnancy. She listened to those words and she then take many pills. She suddenly felt sick and she went to the hospital. She reached the hospital at night. She was asked what has happened, and she refused to say that she had taken pills. They looked for an older person to ask her and then she told them that she was told to take pills. The doctor gave them a letter to go to the police. The woman who told her to take pills, and her, were both arrested. When she got out of jail, she was married and divorced. [Then] she got married and divorced again. She was sleeping outside the house and not given sadza. Then she got married for the third time and she was beaten. She is now in the rural areas.

Kudzai Vherenizho, aged 13: [My brother] has a problem. A girl went to his place telling him that she was carrying his baby. ... my brother beat her and she did go. My brother wanted to drink poison.



Sometimes older men choose young girls as second or third wives.

There is great shame attached to a single girl having a baby with no father, and great shame in having the neighbours know that your daughter or son is involved in constant squabbles with their 'wife/husband'.

Ankurobhwa.

Martha Mariko, aged 13: I know a young child called Nyarai ... who got pregnant at the age of twelve. When she gave birth to the child, she didn't have anything to give her. Then she took the child and hid it in the rubbish pit. The baby was seen by people who were going to the store. They took the baby to the police. The police officer asked the girl what she was thinking about. Then she said that her mother and father were both dead. 'Then I thought of a means of finding money so that I can survive and I got pregnant.' The police officer asked her where she had hidden the baby and she remained silent as a witch who has been found witching. She was beaten a lot and then she was given the child. Right now Nyarai is not like a person. She is now thinking about education and she is eating food from bins and she is living under a tree. She is begging for clothes. She is a wretched person. People tell her that prostituting is not good ... ; *Ndamba kuudzwa akaonekwa nembanje pahuma.*[2] *Chokwadi vakuru vakati nhumba mukadzi mukuruairevi chayadya'*.[3]

The morality which underpins the shame does not allow for much compassion and understanding. This can often make the girl's plight worse. Men and boys are not condemned in the same way.

Winnet Chimurara, aged 14: Their child, you might think it is a rat which is stuck to the wall. You will just see mucus. You wouldn't think that the child's parents were still living. The money the boy earned wasn't enough for them to buy things. He didn't give the wife money, even eleven dollars. These people will get old too early; they get old while they are still young.

And almost inevitably the baby suffers.

Manyaradzi Kotiwani, aged 16: ... The boy first refused the pregnancy ... but now they are staying together. The life they are living is like [that of] a hare and a dog. They always fight and chase each other in the village and people will be watching ...

Sad baby

Faith Sande, aged 13: Tsitsi got pregnant when she was fifteen. She went to her boyfriend's home and his mother chased them both away. Tsitsi didn't know that her boyfriend already had another wife ... when she gave birth to her baby boy, she didn't know what to do. She didn't have food for the baby. Her breast-milk was very little. Living conditions were hard. [Two years later she became pregnant again]. She was divorced at the age of twenty. She stayed with her parents. Then her child died of kwashiokor. The girl then went back to her husband. Life was hard. They started stealing. In the end they were arrested and stayed in jail for two years.

When it is known that a girl and boy are having a relationship (and it is more often the girls who take the punishment) they are no longer allowed to remain in the family. They are told to 'have their own homes'.

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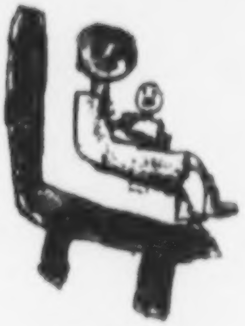
[2] The one who won't listen is the one who gets hurt

[3] The elders say pregnancy is like a mature woman, it keeps its secrets to itself



Immature girls who get 'married' are unable to care for a family because they are 'still babies, they are children'.

Just as there is parental pressure to 'marry', there is also parental pressure to 'divorce' once the marriage breaks down, and this is commonly known in the community.

Anna Bandura, aged 12: My brother got a girl pregnant. The girl told my mother, and the boy refused the pregnancy. And my mother told her [the girlfriend] that she doesn't want to see her. My aunt then took her and looked after her. My mother was mad when my brother beat the girlfriend telling her to leave that day. My aunt asked why he was beating [his girlfriend]. But mother also did not want her to stay. When she gave birth, the baby looked like my brother.

My brother went to ask the *n'anga* whose child was the baby. The baby looked like my brother and they are now staying together. My mother was then told not to go to work and to look after her grandchild. They are now living together. If they hadn't gone to see the *n'anga* they wouldn't have been together.

Grace Njanji, aged 10: I want my children to get married at the age of twenty-nine because if they get married when they are young, they won't be able to do household chores.

Arines Soko, aged 14: I know a girl who got pregnant at the age of fifteen. She struggled a lot. Her parents rejected her. They told her to go to the person who got her pregnant ... the aunt accompanied her to her boyfriend's home. The living conditions were not easy because she didn't know what others do in homes ... her husband wasn't working ... she clothed the baby with a cloth that she tore from her clothes. If you think about it you will cry. If you see inside the house, you think it is the outside. If you see the outside, you think it is a kraal ... [When the baby was crawling] the husband got a job and they started buying the child clothes ... right now they are good parents.

Winnie Samuel, aged 13: One day a girl in our village got pregnant because of not having enough money for school fees. ... Her boyfriend didn't refuse the pregnancy he welcomed her nicely. But when they were living together he beat her. ... After she gave birth to her child she struggled, and she was divorced. At first her parents felt pity for her, but [later] they threw her out of the house. After that she went back to her husband, and her mother-in-law threw her out. She struggled with her child. It had no clothes. That's when she thought going to work was better. She worked and she lived a better life. That's when her parents took her back, and when she thought of those words, '*rambakuudza akaomekwanembanje pahuma*'.[4]

Mike John, aged 17: When you are at school, you will be happy with others, but on the farm it is boring.

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[4] The one who doesn't listen gets hurt

Bhibbi Love, aged 14: Girls at the farm love to go out with men. They get in love at very early ages.

Agnes Parimwa, aged 15: Girls want to dance in beerhalls rather than going to school so that they can have a good life in the future.

Edhai John, aged 14: The beerhall is the only place where everyone enjoys [themselves]. The old, the young, dance to the radios most of the time. Children end up smoking and drinking when they are still young. This mischief continues to this day. Some end up pregnant when they are still young.

Norest Chizodga, aged 13: My parents were separated when I was only five years old. My mother is at Domboseri, my father is at Chinzviro. My sister and I stay with my grandparents. If I don't go to the garden they shout at me. If you have your parents they can do everything for you, but if you don't there is a problem. ... It is better to stay with my grandfather.

Garikai Everard, aged 12: My father divorced my mother because she was a prostitute.

Benias Mwezhurukau, aged 18: I know a girl who ran away from school when she was pregnant. She went to her boyfriend's home and they stayed together. ... The girl then give birth to a baby girl. The boy was jealous and he always beat his wife. The girl then ran away and he is left without a wife ... and looking after the child alone. ...The child has grown up struggling without a mother.

Sheilla Ngwenya, aged 12: We used to stay at Ruwa with my parents. We left because of my father and we went to Bhora. After a month my father started again his doings and he was fired and then we went to Mutoko. We have lived there from one year and my parents were divorced. [My mother] went to her family and left me while I was in grade four. That's when my father married my stepmother. My father was always mad at her ... and so he married another wife. She was the third wife. She drinks beer. She used to beat me and I was going to school without taking any food ...

Michael Mugayi, aged 13: We are twelve in our family. My father has got three wives. The first wife has got four children. My mother is the second wife. In my family I have one brother who went up to form four. He is a clerk. I am the fifth born in our family. I am thirteen years [old]. My mother doesn't like to see me eating

Recreational activities for teenagers are also limited, courtship, the beerhall are often their only options.

A scud

Again poverty, lack of education, stress, and the general instability of many farm labourers, are all factors which can lead to problems within marriages. All too often this leads to 'divorce' or separation.

The consequences of these unstable relationships are experienced by children who are well aware of their own vulnerability and that of other children.

Polygamous marriages can sometimes be equally stressful.

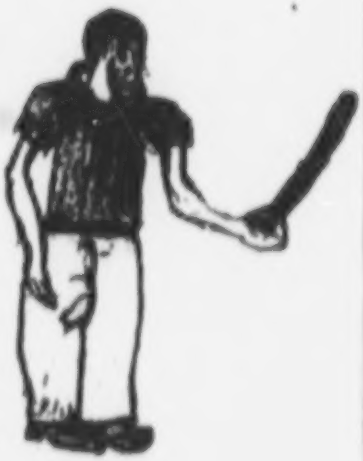
food from my father's first wife. She is afraid that she may go around telling people that my mother doesn't cook food for the children. My father's first wife doesn't want her son to give me his clothes. My brother knows that his mother is very cruel. He gives me all his small clothes. ... The first wife doesn't want the husband to give money to the other two wives. My mother built her house far away from others because of the cruelty of my father's first wife. In our family we don't eat a lot but we are a happy family. My brother and his wife sleep in the same room.

Step-parents

Step-parenting is a common phenomenom but, very often, little attention is paid to the care and education of a child of another marriage.

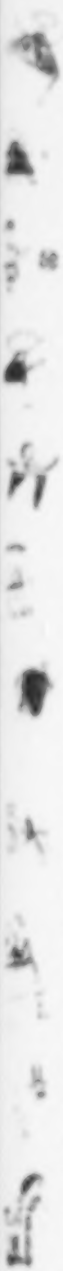
Sibongile Madewa, aged 12: We are seven in our family. We stay with my mother and my stepmother. My father lives at Hillside. That's where he works. He waters flowers, vegetables and looks after the yard. My mother works on the farm which I stay on and my stepmother also works here. My stepmother used to stay on another farm and my father sometimes went there ... without coming here. [Then] my stepmother was fired and she came to stay with us. ... We used to cook together but now she is cooking on her own ... My mother nicely welcomed her. My stepmother's children stole money and food from us. My mother will just say 'God knows'. When my father brought things for us, he will give them to my mother. She will then call my stepmother and share equally. I am now happy because we are all having enough food. We are reading the Bible and watching the television in the sitting-room.

Norest Chizodga, aged 13: I can't stay with my mother because she is not married and she cannot afford to look after us: and my father might have another woman, and she cannot look after us nicely.



Mobeck Shuvko, aged, 14: ... My stepmother became sick and when my father came from work, she started lying to my father that I refused to work and come late from school. My father became angry and beat me because he thought that I don't want to work and I don't respect my parents. But he doesn't know that my stepmother doesn't like me.

Memory Mwale, aged 12: My mother died when I was five years old. Then we started living with our stepmother. At first she was treating us well. When I was in grade two my stepmother took her two children from her first marriage. The two daughters were cruel to me. They gave me little food. In 1993 I was in grade one. Every morning I woke up early and started to put water on the fire; when the water boiled I took a bath and cooked tea. Every day I come from school, eat sadza, wash



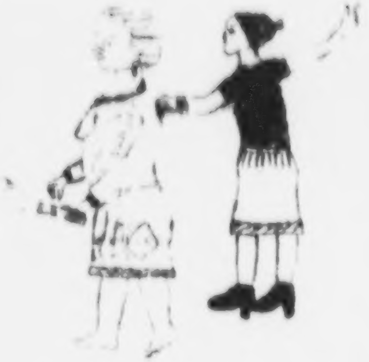
my plates and do all the general cleaning, with my stepsisters doing nothing. There was no one doing the washing of clothes, so I do the washing. I am sad because of the death of my mother [from cancer] when I was small. I work hard every day. My stepmother treats me as a slave. Now I am twelve years old and I am able to do other things with little problems.

Ben Mike, aged 11: My father divorced my mother and took my stepmother. She has two daughters [and] one son. She doesn't like me because I am not her son. She treats me like a spare wheel. She doesn't give me enough food like her daughters. She doesn't wash and buy me clothes. She looks after me like a bush dog because she [doesn't] like me to know many things. She always hits me even for small offences. She doesn't want me to look happy. I am even deciding to run away if she continues treating me like this.

Oscar Matanda, aged 13: My stepfather doesn't like me, but he likes me when my relatives are coming.

Pingidzai Nyamadzawo, aged 14: My stepmother sees me like a golila [gorilla]. She shouts at me every day. I don't know why. I like my father because he cannot shout at me every day. I see my stepmother like a lion.

Kudzai Mugayi, aged 13: We are five in our family. We stay with my mother and my stepfather. But my stepfather has two children with my mother. My father died on the 1st November 1996 and he was buried on the 4th November. It was Sunday. We don't know our father's relatives. We are struggling here in Zimbabwe. My stepfather doesn't like us. We work for him but he doesn't treat us nicely. When we come back from school, we don't eat but his children will be eating. ... When his children have done something wrong, they will be eating, but us, we sleep without eating. My brothers pays school fees for me. My [step] mother will say: 'Your father's relatives have to pay for you. I'm not your father.' And we all start crying ... After eating they take their children and go to watch television and we will be told to stay in the kitchen. ... Our father has left an account for us but they have taken the money from us. I will be happy when I'm at school but at home I won't be. When I was sick they wanted to dump me in the city, but it did not happen. God was with me. They said that I was lying that I was sick.



'My stepmother is always fighting.'

However, not all step-parents discriminate against the children of other marriages.

Beauty Murumba, aged 12: My stepmother [is] good. When I come to school she gives me bread and tea. When I go back home, she gives me supper. On holidays she gives me money and I go to [the] store to buy things we want. When the brothers beat me, my stepmother shouts [at] them. When the uniform was old, she bought me a new one. Me, I listen to my stepmother because she is good.

Muchaneta Kwenda, aged 15: I stay with my mother and my stepfather. Ever since I started staying with my stepfather, he hasn't beaten me or been cruel to me. My stepfather has married my mother when I was still young. ... He is the one who is looking after me, ... the one who is paying school fees for me. ... When we were staying with our father, he told us: 'My children you are going to struggle when I die'. My father died with a problem of legs. That's when my mother and I came here. ... He left me only; Chipo wasn't born yet.

Magaso Isaac, aged 15: I admire my stepmother because she loves me. There is not even one single day [that] she shouted at me or refused to give me food. The only mistake she makes is that she only buys clothes for herself. She does not care to buy for us. [And] she does not wash clothes for us.[But] she does a very good job for me. Whenever I come from school she prepares water for me to wash. She never sends me to go and collect firewood. She always gives me food to eat. The only bad thing she does for me is that she doesn't like to take a birth certificate for me. On top of all I said about her, this is the only thing I dislike about her.

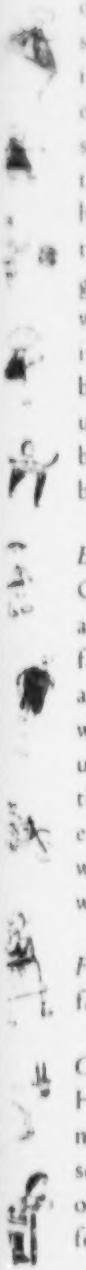
Loss of a parent

Children not only lose their parents when a partnership breaks down, but they do so in death which, with the onset of HIV and AIDS, is not uncommon.

Mark Ranjisi, aged 12: I stay with my brother because my father is dead. He died in 1994 when I was doing grade four. My problem is that of thinking about my father's death. When I think about it too much, I will start crying. ... I work hard at school because it will help me in the future if I will still be alive.

Nyasha Tadererah, aged 12: My father died in 1997. My mother does not work and I don't have anyone who can buy clothes for me. At this time I am little happy. There are many things which make me unhappy. If I see others wearing nice clothes; I will just look.

Shamiso Bvuma, aged 13: My father passed away when I was still in my mother's womb. He was knocked down by a car when he was coming from work. ... My stepfather has got six children. My stepfather has got two wives. My mother is one



of his wives. My stepmother is always jealous of my mother. My stepfather urges my stepmother to become jealous of my mum. We left home last year. … My stepmother is now using my mother's property without permission … . My stepfather is encouraging her … because he feels that mother can do nothing. When stepfather buy something he gave his children more than us. When you ask him for some money to buy a pen he refuses to give you. But when his child want money and he gave him. I stay with him because I don't have a father. His children can visit every place they want freely but I cannot do so because he forbids me. My stepfather don't give mother money but he give stepmother. His children don't allow us to eat food which they cook but we gave them our food when they are hungry. When mother is not around we stay with him but he give us little to eat. We came to Harare because of poverty. We moved … to stay with my uncle, my mother's brother. My uncle has only two rooms. He gave us one room to use. When uncle get drunk he begins shouting at my mother and this hurt me so much. Uncle seems to have no brains at all. To tell the truth what he did to us hurt me so much.

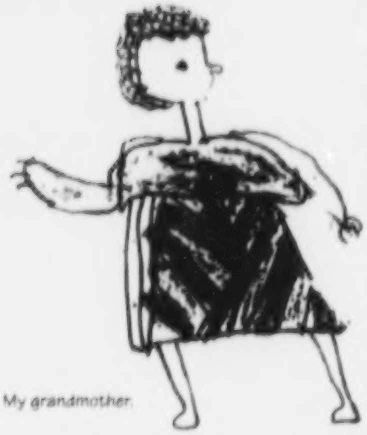
Frequently, if it is the father who has died, the woman cannot support herself and her family. In these circumstances, marriage appears to be an option. An option which does not necessarily guarantee security for the children.

Enward Piano, aged 12: In our family we are six. But my stepfather has two children. Our father is dead. We stay with my mother and my stepfather. We are struggling, and my stepfather makes me think a lot. When we start thinking about our father's death, we start crying. I just wish my father could arise from the dead, and I can tell him my problems. When my stepfather comes from the beerhall, he will say, 'I don't want to look after a prostitute's children', and he will start beating us. And we will not be given sadza, but his children will eat. We sometimes thought of going to children's homes. We sometimes stay the whole day without eating. After school his children eat our sadza and we sleep without eating. When we have done something small wrong, even if his children have done something wrong, he will beat us who don't have a father. I have paid my own school fees.

Life can be very difficult for single women and widows. They work as labourers in the fields, do seasonal work such as picking cotton or grading tobacco. The only job which gives them any status or regular remuneration is that of health worker, housemaid or teacher.

Fungai Ranjisi, aged 14: I live with my mother and my brother. We do not know my father … or even where he is.

Chakanetsa Katiki, aged 16: I live with my mother, my sister and my sister's child. Her mother died when she was very young. My mother is looking after her. My mother is a widow. The saddest day of my life was when my father died. I was at school. My father went to town. He was involved in a bus accident. We heard from others that he was dead. My mother is now looking after me and paying school fees for me. My mother works in the field.



My grandmother.

Even when parents remarry, it is not always possible for them to look after all the children of more than one household. Often a grandmother, or an older sibling with some form of income, will take care of them.

January Dzikoma, aged 12: The widows are casual workers but they look after themselves and their money will not be enough. Their children are going to school, but I don't know if the school fees will be taken from their salaries.

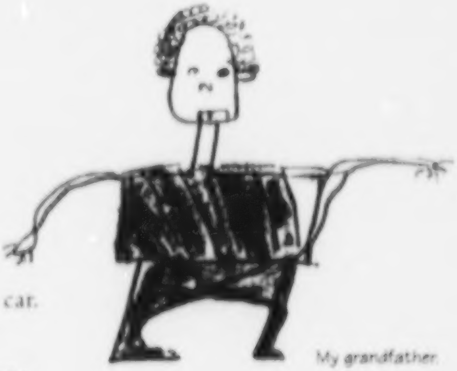
Brian Chifinibwa, aged 14: My problem is that we don't have enough food. My father is dead. My mother has many things to look after. She buys clothing and pays school fees for us on her own. But one person won't be able to look after a whole family. So we won't be able to go to school for not having enough money. Teachers will be saying you have to pay school fees before entering the classroom.

Bigboy Katiwani, aged 14: What made [the girl] get married early was that when she was in grade seven she wanted money very much to buy sweet things. She was doing bad things with elders not knowing that she was hurting herself. Now the husband is dead and the wife and children are struggling. They do not have enough food.

Maria Kamusanga, aged 12: We are a happy family. I come from Chishawasha but I stay with my grandparents at Chisamba. My grandparents love me so much. I go and see my parents during the school holidays.

Egnes Muringazuna, aged 13: I don't stay with my parents because my father was ill and they didn't have money to pay for my school fees ... and my mother wanted to go to the rural areas; now she is staying on a farm in Centenary. My sister is the woman who looks after me. She doesn't buy blankets and shoes for me. These are the things I don't have.

Stephen Phiri, aged 12:
My name is Stephen Phiri.
My father's name is Banda.
My mother's name is Ireen.
My father passed away.
My mother is alive.
I stay with my grandparents.
My father had an accident with the car.
My life is very difficult. ...
My mother is sick and there is no one
who can give me what I want.



My grandfather.

Vengai Madya, aged 14: I sometimes think that if my mother was alive, I would be happy and I would have clothes.

Sarah Petros, aged 15: My parents died and they didn't have relatives. We don't know all their relatives, so we are being looked after by another grandmother. ... she will be paid by the whiteman. My problem is that we don't have birth certificates because my mother didn't have an ID but my father did. So I don't know what can be done.

Master Chareka, aged 16: It was on the 11th January, 1991. I went to collect my bicycle at my uncle's house in Chiwaridzo. It was a long distance from home and I walked. My father was seriously ill. When I reached my uncle's home, his son just said to me, 'Master, do you know that your father is dead?' I did not argue with him, I just made a return journey. When I was a few metres away from home I heard people crying and I knew he was gone. I cried and cried. The third day my father was buried. My parents were divorced and two years after my father's death my mother died. I was desperate to hear that. I became powerless and collapsed. On the fourth day my mother was buried. I was left with my young brother, Itai. Itai also died and I was left all alone. My friends, I tell you it is hard to be an orphan.

Taurai Musona, aged 14: I live in Mashonaland Province. I'm a child of the Musona totem. I stay with my sister. Most of the time I will be unhappy and always crying because of being beaten. Most people saw my mouth white as if I have been eating maize meal but I will be hungry. If I tell her [my sister] that I'm hungry she will say, 'You are too greedy.' Most children will laugh at me saying, 'He is mad.' because of my torn clothes. If I tell them that I want school fees they will tell me that they only have money to buy a *scud*. I really want to be educated. Both my parents have died in 1995. They have said that I have to go to the farm when I'm sick. And they [my sister and her husband] have told me that they won't spend their money, 'taking you to witchdoctors.' And I told them I will be cut a little and given medicines.

Nhamo, aged 11: I am the first-born. I stay with my grandmother. She comes from Mozambique. My mother died. ... I haven't seen my father for four years. ... I like going to school, but money is the problem. ... I went to school at Matemba. I reached grade two. [Now] I have a problem with reading but I can write. ... If I work to earn money, I will buy Mazoe for the baby. She is one-and-a-half years.

Not having a birth certificate is a recurrent practical problem, particularly in one-parent or orphaned families.

Orphans

Although it is common to describe a child as an orphan if they have lost their mother, many children have now lost both parents.

With the spread of HIV, the estimated number of orphans on commercial farms by the year 2006 is 200 000.

Netsai, aged 11: We are two in our family, one boy called Nomore and I am the only girl. My mother died at Stella Farm in 1997. I am now staying with my grandmother. She is a *n'anga* and my grandfather is a farmer. ... My mother's younger sister pays the school fees [$45 a term]. My father does nothing.

January Dzikoma, aged 12: The orphans are looked after by people who are kind, and neighbours who co-operated well with their parents. Other people can help with food, and clothing and money.

Sixty-five per cent of farmers expressed their willingness to assist children orphaned on the farms through further care programmes.[5]

Zvito and Julius Phiri, aged 8 and 12: My name is Zvito. [My brother's name is Julius.] My father died at Dema and my mother died at Bhareta. ... We don't know what killed our parents. We don't know the year they passed away; we were in the communal areas. My father used to be called Abraham and my mother was called Sipho. Our clothes are always dirty and our [older] brother cannot wash for us.

Naison Aaron, aged 16: The farm owner shows us films, dramas and many other things. He did it for us children to grow up clever and to beware of HIV/AIDS which can't be cured and it kills.

Friday Petros, aged 13: I am an orphan. My parents died last year. They were sick with malaria. My father started followed by my mother. The way we survive is that we are being looked after by the farmer. He gives us everything such as mealie-meal, money, clothes and everything we are given by the *murungu*. Even the government also sent money which also helps us in life problems. Even the whiteman helps us in many ways. I wish if God gives me privileges, I will grow up well. I will help three boys to work hard at school so they can have better jobs. The *murungu* has also given us a maid [also referred to as an *ambuya* and probably the health worker or her assistant] who helps us with cooking. When we come from school we have everything cooked. I like school. I want to learn so that I can have a good job.

Profile of Stanley Herepani

My name is Stanley. I am seventeen years old. My mother died when I was thirteen years old and my stepfather died one year ago. Before my mother died, she told me that she was never married by my father and that he was from Mozambique. [My father] died in a hit and run accident. I didn't know my father or some of his relatives. I grew up being looked after by my mother and my uncle since my stepfather was not happy to look after me. My problem of having only one parent affected me right from the beginning ... I only went to school up to grade four. After my mother's and stepfather's deaths, we were integrated into our uncle's family. We stayed with them.

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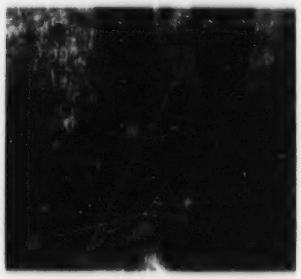
[5] Taken from *Orphans on Farms: Who Cares?* published by SAFAIDS and the Commercial Farmers Union, 1996

After a year [their] complaints of our [being a] burden were the day's song. They complained that they were over-spending and could not afford us. My uncle's wife was not happy. There was a lot of ill-treatment.Then me and my brothers, as little as we are, decided to stay alone. But we said we should see the farm health worker and other community members so that we could tell them our problems. After consultation with the community leaders, we went to see the farmer and his wife. The farmer suggested that I be given a light job so that I earn a living, and now I earn $665 per month. The farmer also gave us a one-roomed house where we are now staying. My young brothers' names are as follows Mavhuto, born 1986, doing grade four; Tongai, born 1988, doing grade three; Zwito, born 1991, doing grade three. Mavhuto and Tongai are going to the farm school. I pay $25 per term per child. My biggest problem is not having enough money to buy uniforms, food, clothes and blankets. In winter, we are in big trouble. [We have] no blankets, jersey or jackets. No money to buy sugar for tea or porridge to warm up our bodies. After paying back my debts, I remain with nothing, completely nothing. It is a very hard life we are living. My uncle now is pledging me a girl to marry, although I did not want to marry early. I want to enjoy my youth but I am forced to marry now. He is saying I should look for a woman who will take care of me since we are all orphans. This person will cook for me and my young brothers. But I don't know whether I will be able to stay with her [because] I am still young. But [because of] pressure and because of culture, I am not supposed to say 'no'. But I know what I will do. I will not have many children since I am looking after my three brothers. They are enough for me and I will have to share my feelings with my wife. I tried to check if my girlfriend is happy to stay with my brothers. She said that it's fine. She will be happy to stay with them. My brothers like playing football and listening to the radio, although I don't have my own. If I get money, I would like to start a project so that I can bolster my finance situation. Now I do buying and selling — buying soap, salt, sugar and selling it here.

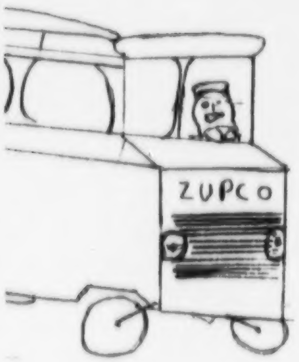
Tonderai Muromba, aged 14: We are eight in our family ... [and] as I see it our parents give us equal love. I'm saying that because they buy clothes for us at the same time and they give us equal food. When you have done something wrong, you will be beaten by both parents. We are not beaten most of the time because we did something wrong whilst they were at work. But I think it is not bad because we would have done something wrong.

Tafadzwa Mukombwe, aged 15: When I started staying with my sister at this farm last month, I haven't seen anything wrong. I don't know how the living conditions will be as time goes on. I have plenty of food. Where I sleep is nice. I have enough blankets and the way I am treated is making me happy. My parents do send me some more clothes.



The future

Children have a great sense of what is fair. Just as they understand injustice.



'I want to be a driver.'

Children want a better life for themselves and their families. They want to contribute to this improvement.

Trust Chabukuruka, aged 14: I have come to stay here because I used to stay with my stepmother. You know that staying with a stepmother is not easy. I don't know where my mother went. My living conditions were that I was always beaten; I'm not given food, and I have gone three days without food, but now conditions have changed. I am happy with the life I am living now. I'm now staying nicely. My life is getting better because I'm staying with my uncle.

Kevin Kuwandika, aged 11: When I grow up I want to look after my family nicely. I will buy things wanted by my family and send my children to school. I will send them to school until they have finished. I will look after my parents and my family. I am going to look after my parents because they are looking after me and giving me food.

Tichaona Dhauka, aged 15: When I grow up ... I want to marry a wife who is good-mannered and who respects my parents and who likes every visitor that comes to the house. I also want to build a house in the rural area ... and I will be a trusted man [a bus driver] who is not proud and who is kind.

Everson Vinge, aged 17: When I grow up I want my life to change. I want to be someone who can be respected for my character, and I don't want to be lazy. When I grow up I want to look after my parents. I want my life to be interesting, not a life which will make my parents unhappy. I don't want to be jealous with other people's lives as others do. This is what I am looking forward to.

Smart Chisare, aged 15: When I grow up I want to be a doctor ... and I want to stay in towns. I want to be well-known for treating people with different diseases. I want my children to finish school. I also want to travel to different countries. I will buy a house for my parents in the rural areas. And I will build a store in Malawi.

Nobody Chipendo, aged 16: When I work as a driver and get money ... then I want to go to the rural area and I want to build a house, and buy cattle, goats, donkeys and a scotch cart.

Catherine Mulemede, aged 13: I love my mother because she gives me enough food. My mother is called Emelda. If I ask for books she gives me. She buys clothes for me. She even buys shoes for me. My mother is a widow. My mother doesn't shout at me. ... She allows me to go and play with my friends. After playing she gives me sadza every day. She doesn't give me hard work. She does everything for me, even if I come late from playing. She doesn't beat me, even if I do something bad for her. She rarely hits me. I play nicely with my friends. We don't fight. If I fall sick my mother sends me to the clinic or to the doctor. If the doctor say I must eat things that build the body, my mother buys everything for me. Sometimes she asks me what I want. Before my mother goes for work she does everything for me. I just wake up and wash, then I go to school. I sometimes help her to wash clothes. She doesn't force me to help her.

Mary Thomson, aged 14: My mother encourages me to work very hard since I am the only child going to school. All my friends admire my mother for her love. She doesn't shout at me, but she gives me a warning. She buys books and enough pens for writing. My mother stays at Budiriro 5B.

Tonderai Char, aged 15: I eat enough food before coming to school. My brother and his wife look after me nicely. So I stay with them happily because they treat me very well.

And when a parent succeeds in providing love and security, the child rejoices.

Our homes & well-being

'What makes me happy is just having enough food and somewhere to sleep.'

Katembeni Kazhembe, aged 16

'When I grow up I want to buy a nice attractive house and have two beautiful children.'

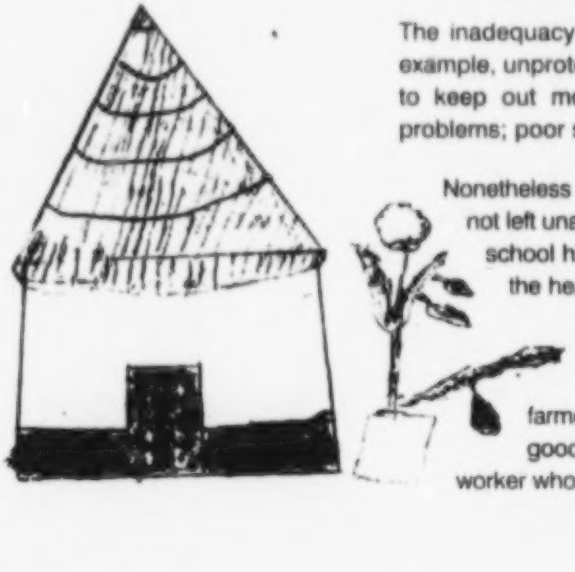
Naume Chidongo, aged 12

People who work at a farm do not work with their mind settled. Many people who work at the farm have no permanent homes. No matter how the conditions are at the farm they don't resign.

Stanley Banda, aged 14

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that a child shall have the right to 'adequate nutrition, housing, recreation and medical services'. However, many of the farmworkers, perhaps the majority, live in communities with inadequate housing, sanitation, water, lighting, fuel and access to land for growing their own vegetables. Houses, even when they are well built, have few rooms which often means that there is no space to adequately accommodate adolescent children who run the risk of sexual molestation and abuse.

The inadequacy of the accommodation gives rise to preventable diseases. For example, unprotected windows and ventilation bricks are often deliberately closed to keep out mosquitoes, but smoke-filled rooms are a cause of respiratory problems; poor sanitation causes diarrhorea, and infections spread quickly.



Nonetheless every farm is now required to have a pre-school so that children are not left unattended all day while their mothers are working in the fields. The pre-school has to be accompanied by a nutrition garden which is supervised by the health worker, who also runs the pre-school, and ensures that children all get one good nutritious meal every day. The quality of the pre-school and the range of activities offered depends, at least to some extent, on the Farm Development Committee and the support of the farmer or his wife. The supplement to this chapter describes examples of good practice at one farm with a good pre-school and an energetic health worker who has the support of the farmer's wife.

The isolation of farm villages sets them apart culturally and socially from other rural communities. There are no bus services in the commercial farming areas, unless the farm is adjacent to the main road, and clinics are rarely within easy reach. Some farms have shops, schools and beerhalls – the latter a very mixed blessing. Approximately ten per cent of farms have schools; and children have to walk up to fifteen kilometres to the nearest school. Young children are obviously unable to walk very long distances, which is another reason why some farm children begin school at the age of ten or eleven.

What happens to workers when they retire? The majority of them are required to leave the village. If they are Zimbabwean, they may have a home or family in a communal area, but if they are from Malawi, Zambia or Mozambique they often have nowhere to go, and virtually no means of supporting themselves. The farm has been their life.

Lizzinet Robson, aged 14: Life on a farm is difficult. The money [people] are given is not enough to buy what they want. Houses are thatched with grass, and they have no toilets. People at our farm drink unclean water which comes from wells. At most farms there are no taps to drink from. The clinics and shops are very far from farms. When people go for work they come home at 5 p.m. at dusk. They do not come for lunch or break. They can be allowed to grow a few crops because of the fertilizer available at the farms. There is hunger at most farms because farmers do not give workers a lot of maize and other foods. Even firewood is not easily got from forests. The farmers do not like to see people with bundles of firewood. I don't like to live on a farm because life there is very difficult. I hope the government will help us solve these problems.

Cloud John More, aged 15: Our house is made up of three rooms and one pole and dagga kitchen. We use the kitchen for cooking, the bedroom for sleeping and we put drinking water in the dining room. The housing on the farms is not suitable. Some rooms are small with very little air. Diseases spread easily. Abuse of children becomes easy also. Father, mother, boys and girls share a two-roomed house. This is a very big problem.

Shelter Chiyera, aged 12: The houses are grass-thatched and they are few. At home we have only two rooms and one grass-thatched hut. We sleep boys on their own, girls on their own, and parents on their own. And there is no electricity.

Housing

There are three broad categories of housing. But the overall picture is often bleak.

Pole and dagga houses are often poorly built and badly ventilated.

They are built generally by casual labourers who often do not want to invest time and effort in building a house which they may have to leave.

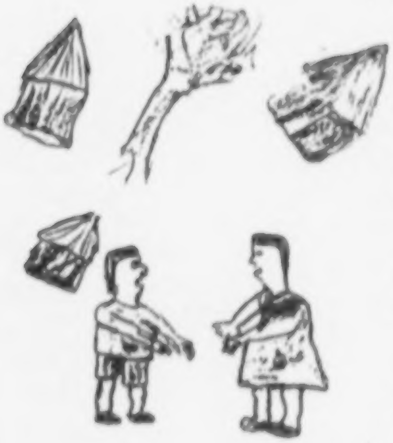
Anna Malunga, aged 11: Our houses are grass-thatched and they are separate. They don't have windows. There is too much smoke in the kitchen.

Zondani Zinge, aged 15: Our kitchen is grass-thatched and the smoke passes through the grass. Once our neighbours kitchen caught fire. A lamp fell, and the fire caught the papers on the walls and the grass outside, and the house was on fire. They lost their blankets.

Poor ventilation means that infections spread quickly.

Alima Amisi, aged 15: When we are about to sleep we close the door to protect our house from thieves. There are three rooms at our home, one is used as the kitchen, one is the bedroom [where the adults sleep], I sleep with my young brothers. We all sleep in one room. Our house is made from tree poles. I tell folk-tales when we are about to sleep. We also pray.

During the rains, the houses can collapse.



Tarisai Mhuru, aged 13: We stay at the farm with my parents. We are not happy because the house is very small. The door doesn't close properly. We put a sack behind the door. We only have two rooms but we are eight in our family: five boys and three girls. We don't enjoy our sleep. We ask for accommodation from our neighbours whenever we have visitors. The window does not close properly. We put a cloth to cover it so that the witches do not enter or peep through the window. We also cover the window to avoid dust from entering our house.

Virimai Chambuluka, aged 13: Some huts are made of dagga and poles. Sometimes these huts fall during the rainy season

Sharon Chirenje, aged 13: The houses we stay in are not strong enough. If you push them, sometimes they can fall. ... when I grow up I am looking forward to buying a nice house.

Brick housing with only a few dark, airless rooms.

Mike Josau, aged 16: Our house has three rooms: a bedroom where my parents sleep, a spare room where my brothers and I sleep, and the dining room where we eat. The kitchen is on its own. Our houses don't have windows or chimneys. But every home has its own tap.

Vengai Bacilea: The houses at the farm are very small. You cannot even turn the other side. You have to wake up and go out then come back facing the side which you want to face. The toilets are very dirty.

Maria Chemonera, aged 17: But one bad thing is that there are few toilets. They are all outside. There isn't even one inside. Young children just use any places as toilets, even near the tap where we get our drinking water, because there are few toilets.

Kudakwashe Njanji, aged 13: At [the farm when we were staying with my sister] we used to stay in a house which doesn't have a door. We used to put a blanket [there instead]. My father came [back] from hospital when we had already moved to this farm. We used to sleep in the same room with my mother and sisters. My father used to sleep with my brothers.

Tarisai Mhuru, aged 13: I stay at the farm with my family. We are not happy staying here because the house is too small... We have a problem when we go to sleep because our door doesn't close properly. We put a sack behind the door so that some frogs and other small pests does not enter our house. We don't have electricity so we use candles and paraffin. We don't have room to sleep, so we ask from the neighbours. One of the windows does not close properly. We cover the window with a cloth to avoid the witches from throwing their medicine inside our house so that we get sick. During the rainy season rain get inside the house. We use the bush as our toilet. We suffer from diahorrea. We go to the see the doctors but the problem doesn't end. Staying without all these things makes our life to become very tough.

Grace Njanja, aged 10: [The farm] is clean, it has electricity. The whiteman wanted to destroy the small grass-thatched houses and renew them with brick houses.

Prudence Mugayi, aged 14: Our house has five rooms, but if we include the toilet and the bathing room it will have seven rooms. And it has windows.

Tawadzwa Nyakunda, aged 11: In town most of their money they spend it on rent; and here on the farm, things like electricity, we get it free of charge and water also.

Caven Noon, aged 14: On farms you will be given space to build your house for free. And if you want a five-roomed house, it is up to you. In cities you need money to buy the piece of land, and you will need money to build the house.

January Dzikoma, aged 12: The kitchens which are being built now have chimneys but the ones which were built a long time ago don't have chimneys. The ones with chimneys will not have smoke inside the houses.

People often live in cramped conditions.

'My mother washes the dishes at the river'

Well-built brick houses: homes with trees and gardens. Usually a farmer only builds a few of these a year.

Where there is a small brick house and a kitchen, large families add another hut to act as a bedroom for the boys, the girls sleep in the kitchen.

Children take pride in their homes when there is reason to do so.

Clemense Kuukwenyu, aged 14: In our home we are four: two boys and two girls. We live in a different way from others in our home. There is a four-roomed house. There is a hedge around our home which protects crops from animals. The houses at our home are not enough to accommodate visitors. Our house is near the road and windows are always closed to prevent dust from settling inside.

Matinetsa Julius, aged 12: Our house is not surrounded by anything. There are some flowers at our house. We plant flowers so that our house looks nice.

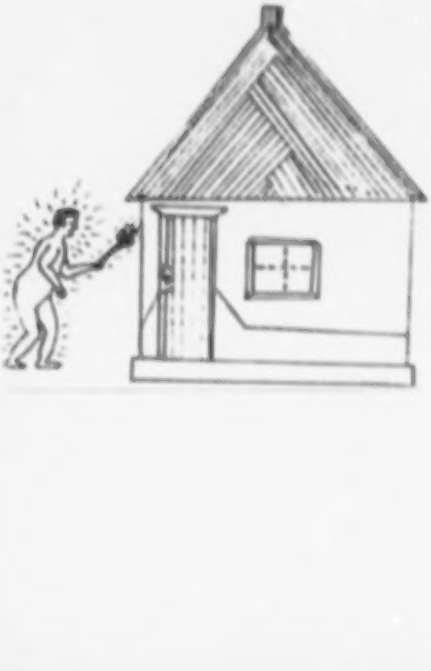
Maria Kamusanga, aged 12: Our house is very beautiful. ... We are nine in our family. I am the last born. We are a happy family. Our house is always smart. In our family we love to read books and tell stories after supper. We enjoy to have food in the kitchen. The door of the kitchen faces to the right. The bedroom is on the right side and it faces the kitchen. The girls' room is at the middle of two rooms.

Belief and superstition

Fear of witches and witchcraft also affects the way people look after their homes.

Mildred Malili, aged 12: We are six in our family. Our house is divided into four rooms. It is surrounded by dried grass. There is electricity at our house. The house is very beautiful. There are nice flowers. There are many trees at our house which doesn't look very nice. When we go to sleep we close all the doors and windows to avoid witches and dust. We have no problem if we happen to have visitors. We only have two toilets. The toilets are not enough because there are three families. Some people have started to hurt me because I stay in a house with electricity. Some of our relatives have started to hurt us. Only God knows why they hurt us. We are a happy family. We enjoy eating sadza and meat.

Ventilation bricks and windows are often sealed by the farmworkers themselves, sometimes to keep out witches, or to keep out mosquitoes, often both.



Oscar Matanda, aged 13: ... We then moved to this farm when I was nine and we were living with [my] grandparents. Mother works as a cook for the whiteman. There is a hedge around our home so that people will not peep inside the yard. In our garden there is a mango tree, flowers and paprika.

Dambudzo Jome, aged 13: People who stay on farms earn very little but they don't pay for rent, water and electricity. The problem which we have on farms is that we don't earn enough.

Grita Jamison, aged 12: Our home is inside a durawall. The durawall is there to avoid thieves. It is made up of grass and it prevents us from being seen when eating. Our house has a broken window and we cover it with a cloth. We cover it with a cloth to avoid mosquitoes. We place a key in the door when sleeping so that thieves

don't come and [so that] they know there are people, so they will be afraid of being cut by an axe. Our living conditions on farms are different – some people bewitch other people because of work.

Anna Bandura, aged 12: At our home we have a grass-made durawall. There is also one big and one small window. We close them with wood to avoid mosquitoes. On our roof there are herbs. When witches get inside the house, they won't be able to get out of the house. We can see them in the morning because they won't be able to run away.

Jane Zhoye, aged 12: We keep our doors closed to avoid people seeing us when we are eating. ... Our house has two doors. We keep them closed for mosquitoes to get inside the house. We also close doors to get rid of witches. At our home there is a grass durawall. When someone comes when we are eating, we don't answer them. After eating we will do so.

Edith Musemwa, aged 12: Here there is a problem of water. In Chikwakwa there is a well where we get clean water.

Vengai Bacilea: People at the farm queue for water. Taps are closed at times. People end up fighting each other.

Peter Smoke, aged 12: My health is good but it can be bad because of the dirty water I drink and dirty toilets which I use.

Benjamin Benjamin, aged 11: My father told me that without water we cannot survive. We go thirsty and hungry because our crops and our animals need water as much as we do.

Fortunate Makore, aged 12: People who work at a farm sometimes go to sleep without washing [because they work long hours].

January Dzikoma, aged 12: I think one tap is not enough for the whole farm and I think more toilets have to be built.

Zondai Vinge, aged 13: The problem on our farm is that – there is also little safe drinking water. Sometimes the water tanks will be locked and there will be no water from the taps. People we will be drinking river water.

Fences and closed doors are used to keep away prying neighbours.

Water

Provision of water points varies considerably: some farms have a borehole, some provide taps within the farmworkers' village, some expect their workers to fetch water from the rivers. Very few farms provide their workers' houses with running water.

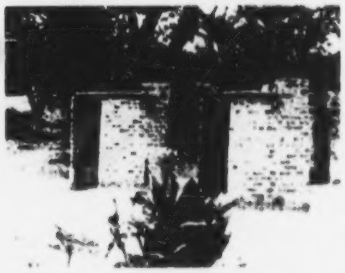
Sanitation

Not every household on the commercial farms has a toilet.

Poor sanitation is also a cause of disease.

Partson Shamwa, aged 10 : What I don't like about the farm is that there are no toilets.

Abigail Victor, aged 12: There are two rooms [in our house]. My father and mother have their own bedroom. The room we sleep in is not very big. Our house is made of pole. There is no toilet. At times the whole family get sick at the same time. We don't wear shoes. Last time I suffered from pneumonia. I want to thank the Lord for what he did for me. My mother keeps quiet like an owl. My mother always borrows money to go to the hospital with me. My family suffers a lot.



Nyasha Tadererah, aged 12: Children are dying because of not having toilets. Toilets that we had have fallen [in] because of rain. So many people are using bushes. Disease is now spreading such as diahorrea, stomach problems and many others. This is making people unhappy.

Simba Dzinamareka, aged 15: The living conditions of our farm are not good. Things are not in the right way. Things which are wanted on our farm are water, toilets and houses.

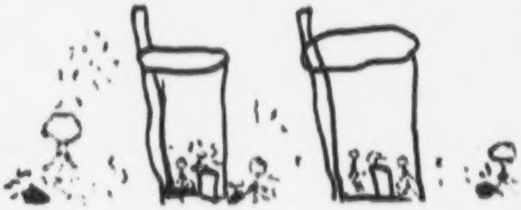
Blair toilets

Casual workers do not often see the point in making an investment of labour, if they are not going to benefit from the results.

Tawadzwa Nyakunda, aged 11: There are Blair toilets on this farm. But there are temporary workers who come to pick cotton and they don't use the toilets properly.

Anna Malunga, aged 11: The whiteman wanted Blair toilets to be built, but people refused to dig pits.

Grace Njanja, aged 13: I hate people who use the roads instead of toilets.



Preventable situations

Hunger

Vengai Karandura aged 11:
I don't like staying here because we have to buy maize. In January we are hungry because our grains will have finished and my father looks for maize from others to buy.

Children are often hungry.

Anna Malunga, aged 11: Children are left alone at home and they will not have enough food for the day.

Julius Phiri, aged 15: Last year ... I was very hungry than ever [before], I went for two days without food and I was only drinking water. My parents didn't have money to buy food. But when they have money we eat a lot. My father is a clerk and my mother doesn't work. In our family we are seven.

Pinos Kalumo, aged 14: During school holidays I go to work ... some of the days we finish at 4 p.m. and we start at 6 a.m. but one thing that hurts me is that when we go back home there is nothing to eat or drink. ... One day I went to work and I had a terrible headache. The foreman came to where I was seated, and he said, 'Hey, you boy, you are seated, do you think your space can move!' I didn't think he was talking to me. The foreman said, 'Hey boy! don't play with me, okay! I was talking to you and why didn't you answer me "boss"? You know that I can do something about you?' Then the farmer heard the words that the foreman was saying, and he said, 'Don't be rude to the kid, because your days can be over' and I went home.

Nomatter Phiri, aged 10: I have told my father that I ran away because I have stolen meat because I was hungry and I have eaten the meat in the maize field. I was caught because I leave the pot unclosed. My father leave me and then I go to bed and I dreamed I was fighting with my father.

Partson Shamva, aged 10: At the weekend most people will be drinking. There isn't a beerhall on the farm but there is a store where people buy scuds. ... I think it is not good because all the money will be used for drinking and when you are drunk you don't think of children at home. ... And they will be asleep without eating any food.

Tirivei Zhonota, aged 15: My father is tall and thin. He prefers drinking beer. He always wastes his money for bad things so that at home we don't have enough food to eat.

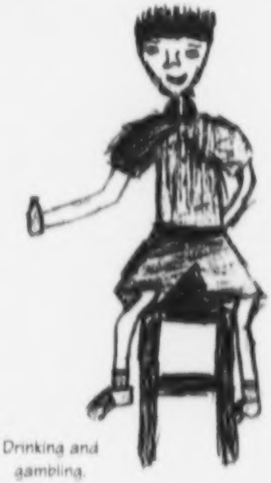
Tsitsi Mwale, aged 11: I think drinking is not good because when they are drunk they walk in the middle of the road and they might be involved in a car accident, and if you get drunk you might fight each other. ...

Tafadzwa Nyakunda, aged 11: Some fathers, after pay-day, waste money in beer gardens, forgetting the children at home.

Tonderai Munemo, aged 14: My father drinks a lot [and] sometimes quarrels with my mother ... but we are happy most of the time.

Alcohol

Some parents spend the little money they have drinking and gambling.



Drinking and gambling.

This can exacerbate existing problems.

Shamiso Pakati, aged 13: I haven't seen a cruel man like him. ... During the first days my father's brother was not working, he used to go to the beerhall early in the morning. Many people were sick and tired of his behaviour.

Denny Vambe, aged 16: When our parents drink beer they are forgetting about us. The money they use to drink beer is the one we will be looking forward to [using to] pay our school fees.

Hunger affects the performance of children in school.

Lovemore Mike, aged 15: I stay with my grandfather and grandmother because my mother died and I am left with a father only. There is no school where I used to stay with my father ... Our grandfather does not give us blankets and it will be very cold. We stay [at school] the whole day without food, and we don't have clothes. What makes me unhappy is the way our grandfather treats us. He told us to sleep outside because my younger bother urinates when he sleeps. Sometimes I ask myself that if my brother [does this] does he have to sleep outside? My brain thinks a lot even when I am at school ... so it will disturb me to learn ... even in the classroom I sometimes don't listen to the teacher. I am a child of starvation.

As does cold in the winter when children do not have jerseys or shoes or blankets.

Mino Zhuwawu, aged 16: You know that farm life needs money. Food is not easy to find. We sometimes sleep without eating. Sometimes I come to school without eating and stay the whole day but I will be very hungry. When I go home in the evening, I see no sadza ... This kind of life is bad, my relatives. I have finished.

Nelia Samson, aged 14: Children come to school without shoes while their fathers spend money drinking beer. Children will be crying because of cold. Farm life is hard.

Access to food

Not all children have enough to eat, and many families go hungry during the dry season, but they have clear ideas about what they should eat.

Grace Gomani, aged 13: People came back very late. They will find their children gone to bed. Children go to bed without eating any food.

Gift Watch, aged 12: We are many in our family. The kilo of mealie-meal we get is not enough. As you know boys and girls eat a lot.

Dadirai Chari, aged 13: We like eating sadza and meat but we cannot afford it, so we only eat okra and forest relish.

Tawadzwa Nyakunda, aged 11: I think children have to be given enough milk and porridge and they have to go to school. What I like about the farm is that ... we are given maize meal every time, and everyone is given it.

Aswell Domigo, aged 14: When I grow up my children will eat vegetables with sadza or sadza with eggs. I will give them tea, and bread with eggs in the middle. In the afternoon they will eat sadza and meat mixed with rape. I will give them food which will build their bodies .

January Dzikoma, aged 13: There are some on the farm who have problems with food – especially widows because they don't have husbands who work. ... Men will be buying mealie-meal because the money will be taken from their salaries. [The mealie-meal] won't be enough for the whole month, it takes two [salaries]. And only the permanent workers get fertilizers for their fields.

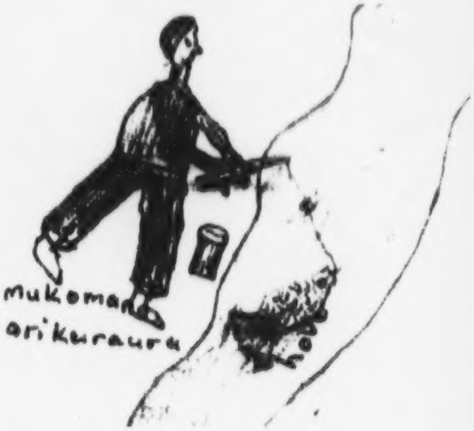
Dodirai Dean: My father likes to eat sadza and meat but he doesn't have that. We eat sadza every day with okra.

Tafadzwa Nyakunda, aged 11: People go for work without food or they carry *mahewu* without sugar to drink.

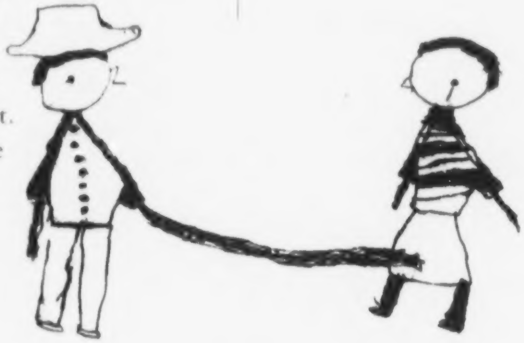
Tsungirirai Ben, aged 8: It was on Christmas day ... I went inside the house and stole some sugar. Then I met my mother at the door. And she asked, 'What are you eating?' and I kept quiet. And she said, 'That's why the sugar is going down so quickly' and she said, 'Come here!' And I ran away. Then she told another boy to catch me. And I cried when he did. My mother said, 'Bring her here' and he did. My mother took me inside the house and beat me with a batter stick. My eyes swelled because of crying. I stayed the whole day without eating. They were refusing to give me food. I was given food in the evening when my father came from work. I ate the food and went to bed. I will never forget that day.

Virginia Kandoora, aged 12: I have stolen relish cooked by my mother. The relish was meat. My mother asked, 'Who has stolen the meat?' I denied that I had stolen it. My mother became very angry. I started shivering like a reed in the water. When my mother was beating me, I cried and ran to the forest. I came back at around 4 p.m. Then my mother was nice to me by giving me *maputi* sweets and two dollars.

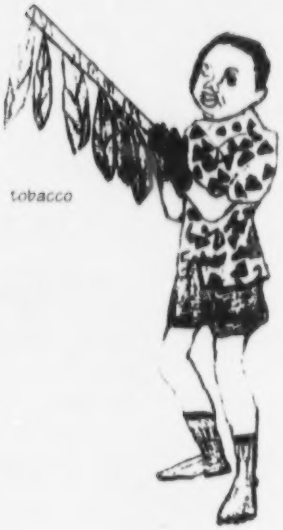
The daily diet is mainly sadza and vegetables or kapenta fish.



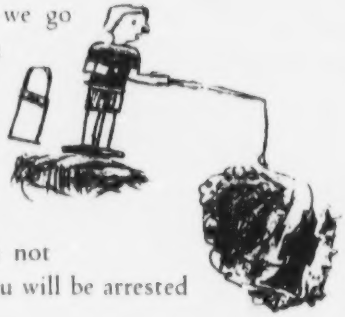
Children are often tempted to take a little food without the permission of their parents.



Some farmers allow their workers access to certain facilities such as the grinding mill, others give monthly rations or handouts. Sometimes conditions are attached.



Ingidzai Mupambuza, aged 15: Most of the time we go fishing at our dam on Sundays. Fish is our relish that's why we don't leave here [this farm] because fish gives us vitamins and many other things. Other people from other farms pay money so that they can fish.



Gift Mareko, aged 17: We buy firewood but it is not expensive. If you are seen cutting down trees, you will be arrested as in other places.

Fungai Ketani, aged 14: The owner of the farm is kind. He gives his workers oranges for free and when it is month-end the workers don't have to rush to look for maize to buy, he gives it to them and deducts it from their salaries.

Tapiwa Chakoma, aged 18: Each and every day we get a tin of milk from the dairy.

Edina Makwere, aged 16: The farm owner is very kind. He gives the workers mealie-meal if they have worked for the whole month without being absent.

Rosemary Mutize, aged 16: I like eating sadza, vegetables, meat, and drinking tea with bread or potatoes. We grow vegetables such as rape, tomatoes, onions, maize and sweet potatoes.

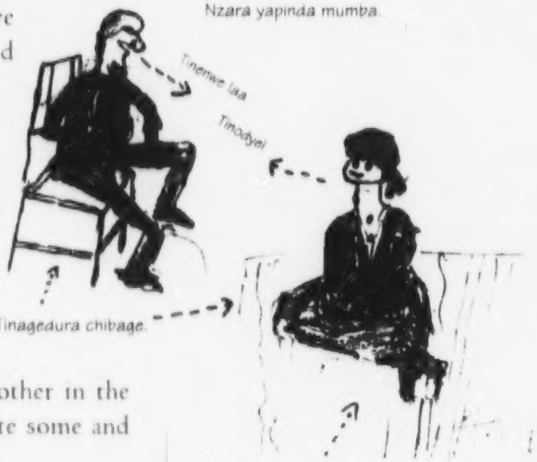
Some farmworkers have vegetable gardens which make a significant difference to the children's diet.

Angela Mupesa, aged 14: We grow pumpkins, the ones called *dindimangwe*, and gem squash in our garden. Pumpkins are very good food which gives energy in the body. This is food which is suitable for poor children. We eat pumpkin before we go to school. Pumpkins are grown in rich good soil. They are grown during the rainy season. We can have pumpkin with tea or mashed. I like pumpkin very much. We grow it every year at our house.

Shaudhai Godfrey, aged 14: Staying on farms is better. We have gardens and grow vegetables such as *rugare*, rape, tomatoes and cabbages. We even grow cotton, soya beans, maize and wheat. In cities they don't even know what the cotton stalk looks like.

Shanai Amon, aged 14: We are given pieces of land to cultivate and we are also given seeds. Before planting, we are given tractors for ploughing the fields. We have water to water our gardens and the water is free.

Thom Bernard, aged 13: On our farm we are given many things, all we have to do is work only. We get fruits such as bananas, oranges, mangoes and many others for free.


Nzara yapinda mumba.
Tinenwe laa
Tinodye!
Tinagedura chibage.
Nhasi tinodye baba mwana.

George Malau: We are four children in our family. ... In the morning we eat breakfast – tea and bread; tomatoes are cooked in the afternoon. We eat [at] lunchtime sadza and vegetables. At supper we eat sadza again. ... In my family we plant vegetables: beans, okra, onions, sugarcane, maize, potatoes and sweet potatoes.

Falisters Muneri, aged 10: The people in the [farm] village cultivate maize. The farm owner gave them fields ... I sometimes help my mother in the field. I will be weeding. [Last year we got] 22 bags of maize – we ate some and some we were selling. We used the money to buy clothes and food.

Saul Steven, aged 16: Those in town only eat food bought from the shops, whereas some of us who stay on farms eat maize from our gardens. The owner of our farm ploughs for his workers and he gives them seeds for free. Those in town buy everything. If they don't have money, it means that they don't eat that day. Some of us who stay on farms, we don't buy things like groundnuts and roundnuts. ... Farmworkers earn $600, which is not enough to buy food.

Zondai Vinge, aged 13: The problem we face on our farm is that there are few fields ... we are allowed to pick wheat when the whiteman has finished harvesting. We use the wheat to bake bread and it helps us at breakfast.

Simbai Chaparira, aged 13: Firewood is the main problem. The owner doesn't want to see us looking for firewood at his farm. People who stay at the farm have got a land problem. They are given very small pieces of land and they are not paid much. People cannot afford to buy food, clothes and household furniture. The prices have gone up. Looking at $20, you can only buy two loaves of bread. From the $600 they get, how much food can they buy? After all, mealie-meal has gone up.

But not all farmers provide these.

Anna Malunga, aged 11: On farms, people are not allowed to grow their own crops, but in the rural areas you can grow whatever you want.

During the rainy season, there is always more food, and vegetables – such as mushrooms – can be harvested from the veld.

Mike Josau, aged 16: We don't have a vegetable garden at home, so we don't often eat vegetables.

Most farmers have strict rules about poaching.

Grace Njanja, aged 13: Here, we have no fields. My mother's sister buys maize from the whiteman.

Vengai Karandura, aged 11: We get mushrooms like *derere, buve* and *nzeve* from the forest.

Cloud John More, aged 15: I want to go to the rural areas because everything will be the right way. You can go and hunt in the forest. Here in the farms you will be arrested.

Garikai Mwara, aged 12: We have lived at ... farm. We have left because there was little money. If you found a cabbage on the ground and pick it up, you will be sent to jail. Most people were always sick and at your home things were always stolen ... we were looking forward to going to another farm.

Preventable diseases

Preventive diseases are prevalent due to poor water supplies, lack of immunization, a poor diet, stress, bathing in rivers that have bilharzia, etc.

Zondai Straithberd, aged 14: A lot of children on the farms die due to lack of prevention or lack of treatment of the following illnesses: measles, polio, sore throat, coughing. This is due to very little wages on the farms. Transport is also a problem. People do not have transport to hospital to get their children treated.

Partson Shamwa, aged 10: Our house has windows. We open them in the afternoon and we close them at night. We use firewood for cooking.

Brightest Matope, aged14: I think it is best to purify the water, so we don't get diseases; build more rooms [on our houses] and put locks on the doors.

Zandia Churu, aged 15: The children who live in farms do bad things because we do not have any things to do. We play in bad places and end up sick with diseases such as bilharzia, especially playing in unpurified water.

Zondani Vinge, aged 15: We have a problem at the farm because we do not have enough space to plant our own crops, and drinking water is not enough. [There] are only two taps; sometimes they are closed. Sometimes we end up drinking water from the rivers.

Shupikai Chida, aged 12: Farm life is not good because people are always sick with stomach pains, malaria and cholera. ... On the farms people don't have enough food for their children.

Rebecca Chabatamoto, aged 14: When I came to school, I was sick with asthma. I was feeling very bad. I fell asleep without anyone noticing. When I left home, my father had upsetted me ... I came to school and I didn't want to, I wanted to go [anywhere else] that I know. I was feeling more pain when another boy came into the classroom and he beat me. That day I asked myself, saying, 'Do I step where others do, or do I step somewhere else?' ... that day I haven't eaten anything. And I don't want to stay with my parents because they don't treat me nicely. I sometimes wish I had someone who would send me to the doctor's. ... When I think about it, I sometimes cry, as it seems that others don't have problems and I don't have parents. I sometimes say 'God help me' and I used to pray but that hasn't worked. ... My parents don't know how painful the disease is ... so what I want is help from people who are kind. These are my words.

Tarisai Mburu, aged 13: We have a problem during the rainy season because the rain gets inside the house. We don't have enough toilets. Sometimes we go to the bush to help ourselves. We get water to drink from very far away. Diarrhoea is one of our problems. We go to see the doctors but the problem doesn't end. The way we survive is a problem.

Virimai Chambuluka, aged 13: People on farms suffer from many diseases because there is no proper sanitation. People on farms are malnourished because the food they are given by the farmers is the same. The farmers should give us pieces of land for us to grow a variety of food crops. And there are not enough toilets and no clean water to drink ...

Norest Chigodza, aged 13: People get sick here with diarrhoea, headaches and malaria.

Minato Bbibbiyo, aged 13: In our home we are six and we live in houses made from poles [and] thatch and [we have] two rooms. Boys sleep in the other room. The house is small and windows are unrepaired; during the night mosquitoes bite us. Our home is near a river. There is a hedge around our home and there is a small field inside. We use water from an unprotected spring and this [has] made us prone to diseases. Most people go to look for work. The area is not suitable for a maize crop. At our home there is a kraal, chicken-run and sugarcane.

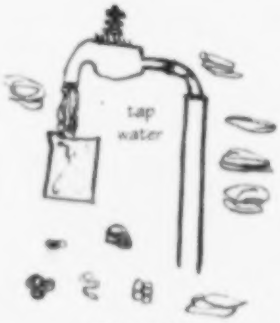
July July, aged 15: ... I came to school with my friend, we were learning good lessons. After break time we went into the classroom ... and I started to sleep, but I didn't know that I was sleeping, and other pupils learn, and I don't know what they are learning about. When the teacher saw me ... she said, 'Hey July, wake up! What are

Asthma is a common problem exacerbated by children sleeping in smoke-filled rooms.

The windows are kept closed to keep out mosquitoes and witches.

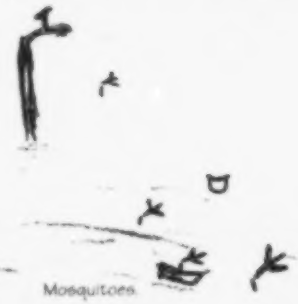
But it is also caused through stress, and exacerbated by not being properly treated.

Diarrhoea



'They are feaces.'

Malaria is another very common illness on the farms.



you sleeping for?' I was very surprised and I didn't have an answer to answer my teacher. And she said, 'You are a disaster for sure! You sleep in class when I am teaching!' ... and other pupils in the classroom laughed and I didn't know what they were laughing for. ... At the end of the day I went to the toilet ... and I hear the words, '...'ly! 'ly! 'ly!' but I didn't know who was saying these words and the wind was blowing and the weather had changed and I ran fast and when I got to the mountain, I started shivering. The mosquitoes were hovering round my face and I think, 'Oh, I have malaria' ... and my parents said, 'You must go to the hospital'. And I was crying, like I had been beaten by my father, and he said, 'Oh dear! Don't cry my son. You must be oright'. [all right]. We went to the hospital. We saw doctors and nurses. I have been given tablets. Soon I felt oright. And I came back to school in a good condition.

Cigarettes are also a temptation.

Sandy Saidi, aged 14: Children do not know that they will get sick with smoking which they are starting early. Afterwards they will start pointing at people saying, 'Someone wants to kill me'. They will forget that they started smoking early.

Many young girls become pregnant at an early age.

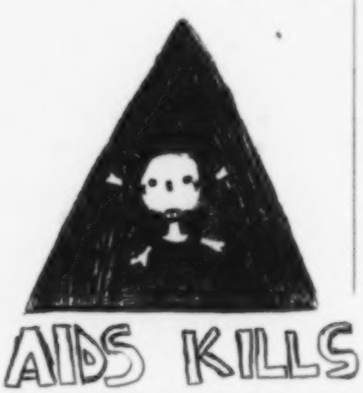
Katembei Kazhembe, aged 16: Some girls are having children at the age of fifteen years. It is not good because they will be operated on, because the baby will be too big.

Sexually transmitted diseases

HIV and AIDS

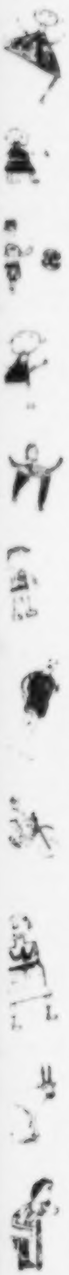
Taisi John, aged 14: The people on the farms do not practise good hygiene. After using condoms they do not know how to dispose of them. They throw them around. Children end up picking them up and blowing them up as balloons. Diseases end up affecting children and this is very bad. The health worker must educate the people thoroughly about condoms.

Katembei Kazhembe, aged 16: I have heard that if you use a razor, needle and injections which have been used with someone who has got AIDS you will also get it. And when someone has been hurt on a leg and if our blood gets into each other, the person with AIDS can pass it to someone who doesn't have it. And [that you can prevent it] by using condoms when having sex. But the [best way to prevent it] is not having sex.



Most of the children who have attended school know about the causes of HIV and AIDS.

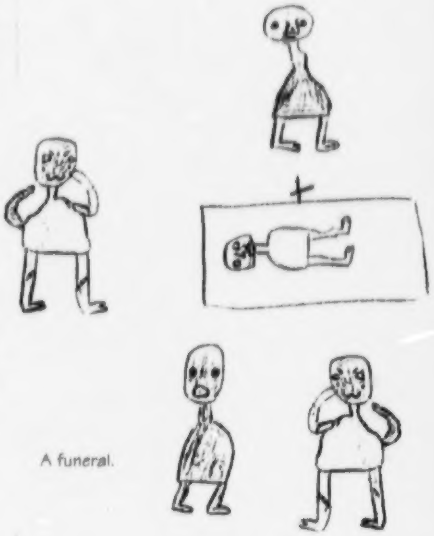
Fortunate Gyson, aged 12: Nowadays there is a disease of AIDS. If you play with men or boys, women can have the disease which is not cured and you will end up dead. The disease doesn't care whether it is a younger or an older person. We should beware of this in our life ... even when we are walking alone on the roads.



More Tenani, aged 14: AIDS has hurt many people. These people are not self-controlled ... if you don't listen to the teacher, you are going to die of the disease ... some [people] play with their life. You have to be self-controlled.

Tsitsi Mwale, aged 11: [AIDS is caused by] getting into a beerhall, having too many men, using the same razors and needles. [So you must be] faithful with one partner and you must use condoms.

Benjamin Benjamin, aged 11: In my future I am expecting to be a doctor when I finish school. Because I want to treat people. There are millions and millions of people who are suffering with AIDS ... Young boys and girls are following their older brothers and sisters who ruined with their lovers. They are catching deadly diseases such as AIDS and STDs. I want to be a high educated person. I don't want to spoil my life.



A funeral.

Edith Musomva, aged 12: When boys and girls are in love before proposing marriage, they might have sex and so they end up having the disease.

Netsai, aged 11: When someone is very sick, she [my grandmother] can heal them, except for AIDS. There isn't any medicine for it.

Nhamo Gamba, aged 11: I don't know [people who have died of AIDS] I have just seen them. They were slimming and then they died. I have never heard about AIDS.

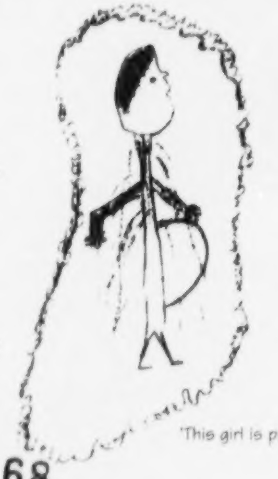
However, there is a tendency to assume that responsibility for the spread of the disease falls on women.

Dadiriai John, aged 13: [My mother] is not supposed to be unfaithful because she can have AIDS and die and I will be left alone without anyone to look after me.

Edith Musomva, aged 12: If a woman destroys her family because of prostituting and having affairs with many men, she will get AIDS. ...

Memory Bulaundi, aged 12: [To prevent AIDS] there must be less prostitutes ... and they must stop their doings because most of them are sick.

Leonard Corffat, aged 15: No, I haven't heard [what causes AIDS] but [I know the cause] is not to be faithful to one partner. ... There is nothing we can do about it. ... [People who are unfaithful] have to be arrested.



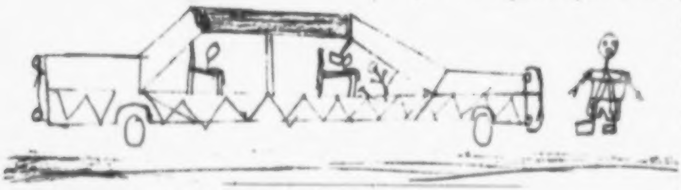
'This girl is pregnant.'

Some children who had not been to school, did not know about HIV and AIDS

Naison Aaron, aged 16: The farm owner shows us films, dramas and many other things. He did it for us children to grow up clever and to beware of HIV/AIDS which can't be cured and it kills.

Some farmers have programmes to help the children of orphans.

Friday Petros, aged 13: I am an orphan. My parents died last year. They were sick with malaria. My father started, followed by my mother. The way we survive, we are being looked after by the farmer. He gives us everything such as mealie-meal, money, clothes, and everything we are given by the *murungu*. Even the government sent money which also helps us in life problems. Even the whiteman helps us in many ways. I wish if God gives me privileges, I will grow up well. I will help three boys to work hard at school so they can have better jobs. The *murungu* has also given us a maid who helps us with cooking. When we come from school we have everything cooked. I like school. I want to learn so that I can have a good job.



I was almost run over by a car, going to the store, and I was beaten ... my brother asked my mother why she wanted to beat me, and my mother said, 'He was almost run over by a car'. My brother then said, 'You have to forgive him,' and my mother forgave me. (Ocean Taitosi, aged 11)

Misbeck, aged 11: I boarded a bus which was going to Mazowe. It was Sunday. The bus ran off the road and collided with a tree. When it happened the bus was trying to overtake a car in front of it and there was a car coming the other way. And that's when it ran off the road. And I was badly hurt. I went to the hospital and I stayed in bed until Wednesday. The bus is called ZUPCO. My parents were told to pay two hundred dollars and they did. When I left the hospital, I went home and started going to school. ... [Then] I felt pain on my leg and I went back to the hospital for a check up and I was told that my leg was broken. My leg was plastered and I stayed in hospital for two days, and after two weeks, the plaster was taken off my leg.

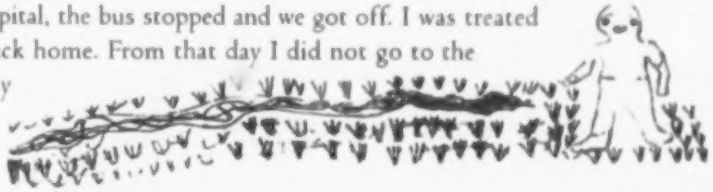
When accidents happen, farmworkers are vulnerable because they have no understanding of, or recourse to, the law.

Cheruwa Cheidi, aged 15: The hospitals are very far away and there are no buses.

Access to health care

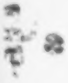
There are few clinics in commercial farming areas. Not only do farmworkers experience difficulties reaching clinics elsewhere, due to limited public transport, but they find the clinic fees expensive.

Tendai, aged 12: I was bitten by a snake in the forest. It was in the afternoon ... I was with my two friends. We were walking in the grass and I was bitten by a snake. It was dark-coloured. When it bit me I started crying and my friends said, 'Sorry Tendai'. Then we went back home. When I reached home, my body was washed. After my body was washed, I changed my clothes. Then we went to the bus stop and we saw a bus which was going to the rural areas. We ran for the bus and we got in. When we reached the hospital, the bus stopped and we got off. I was treated and we went back home. From that day I did not go to the forest again. My father did not allow me.



Norbert Alick, aged 13: When someone gets sick on the farm, he or she is taken to the hospital. Even if someone dies, the person is buried free of charge and the *murungu* gives wood for the coffin.

George Mufuka, aged 16: Last year at the hospital people were treated free of charge but this year everything needs money.



Brightest Matope, aged 14: The most important thing for the village would be to have a clinic. Children need to be looked after carefully and when they get sick they should be taken to the clinic, and also given enough food.

Katembeni Kazbembe, aged 16: Many people are dying because of not having enough clinics. ... We use mini-buses to go to the clinic. It costs $15.

Q. If you were given the power to change this place, what would you do?

A. I would build more toilets, weed the yard and build a clinic.

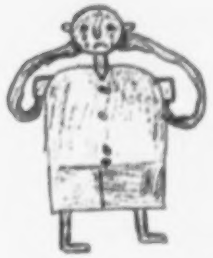
Manyara Undi, aged 12: My mother had a big problem with her young child. He was sick but my mother had no money to go to the clinic. So what can we do? So my father went to see [his boss], but the whites did not want [to hear him]. I don't know what I can do [about] that.

Hazvinei Joramu, aged 13: [My mother] doesn't know that her brother's child has died at twelve midnight today. My uncle woke us up telling us what has happened. We left him going to tell the *murungu*. My uncle has two wives. The one don't have children and the other one have two children and the third one is the one who is dead.

Robson, aged 18: Sometimes I tell my father that I am sick but he says that I am lying. But if it is my stepmother's child, the money to pay the hospital is offered. Another time I wanted to make him arrested because I had to go to school when I am sick. ... I am suffering from my legs, eyes and with a headache, so I need to go to hospital to be healed ...

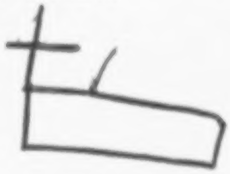
Jane Kanengoni, aged 14: When I think about my grandmother dying, I will start crying because she was the one who looked after me since I was a baby, and now I am a girl aged fourteen. She was the one who looked after me till she died, so I don't have rest in my heart. ... I don't even know about my father's death. I haven't seen him because it was said that I was still very young.

Farmworkers rely on the farmer for transport if they are ill.



The possibility of becoming ill is an anxiety that children live with, because they know that access to treatment is limited, and they fear the consequences. However, in unhappy families, this fear is intensified by familial tensions.

Death is a familiar.



'We were left alone.'

Ephraim Saidi, aged 16: First I want to talk about the death of my father. He passed away in 1986 in October. We were three when he passed away. I am the first born. I was born in 1983 in November. I have got two twin brothers. They are called Alphan and Albert Saidi. My mother's father took care of us after the death of our father. He later passed away in 1992 the same month as my father passed away. My grandmother is looking after us, she is still working but she is now very old. We don't have birth certificates because our mother doesn't have an ID. My grandmother paid school fees for us from grade one to grade six. My mother is not married. I am struggling to get a birth certificate so that I can go to school and improve my family's life. My father doesn't have any relatives. He came from Tanzania when he was still very young. He got married to my mother and they had children together. My mother doesn't know where she came from. She doesn't care about taking birth certificates for us. I always think of looking for a job so that I will help my mother. I wish I had relatives who can look after us. The age of my grandmother worries me a lot. I always talk to myself that if she dies, what am I going to do? Who is going to look for us? Although I know that there is death, it pains me so much. The other thing that worries me is that if my mother dies when I don't have any accommodation, where am I going to stay with my brothers? It was going to be better if we have relatives. My main problem is how to get birth certificates for me and my brothers. My mother is struggling to work so that she can look after us. Whenever I start thinking that I did not go to school, it worries me a lot. I don't even know where to start my life.

Alternative treatment

Lack of education, superstition and fear, are often a source of unhappiness and confusion – this can be self-perpetuating.

Anna Malunga, aged 11: I don't want to stay here for the rest of my life because if you buy your own property people will hate you and they can kill you. ... There are too many witches who hate on the farms.

Rose Kamundi, aged 11: She [my small sister] was playing where brick houses were being built and a woman gave her drinking water and that's when it started. Her head started to grow bigger. [My parents] think she was bewitched. They first went to the clinic and then they were sent to Harare. They spent two years going [there]. But nothing happened. Pictures were taken.

Poverty and dependence can put a great strain on the extended family.

Brighton Nunana, aged 16: I feel sorry for my father who suffers from bad eye sight. I don't know whether his eyes are going to heal up. He was stopped from working. I hope one day someone will come and cure his eyes. His name is Member. If I look at his relatives, I always ask myself, 'Does this mean that they don't want to

help my father'. Not even a single relative cares about my father. What worries me is that when my father was working many people used to come to our place, but now not even a single person visits him. Old people always say, 'Don't give love to others because tomorrow is another day'.

I am not happy with what my father's relatives do.

Forget Mirrion, aged 13: The name of the person whom I admire is called Cloud. He stays at Tsatsi. He helps the poor. I used to have a problem with my legs. He is the one who helped me. I love him because he always buys me shoes and clothes. He loves me with all his heart. This really pains me because he does everything for me. I suffered when he passed away. My parents stay at Muzarabani. They cannot even assist me with anything. I went back home. I used to have a problem with my eyes and legs. Most of the time I used to cry.

Angela Mapesa, aged 14: I was sick with headaches. They were caused by enemies who wanted me to be sick all the time. They used traditional herbs.

Q. How did you know they were enemies?

A. My mother was told by the prophets.

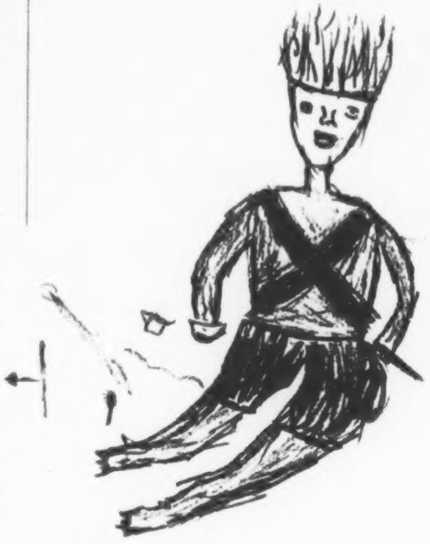
Mike Josau, aged 16: I think witchdoctors are not good, because when you go there, they will tell you that your relations are causing your sickness, and you will end up hating one another.

Rwisai Mapesa, aged 14: If you go to the health worker you will be given pills, and if you go and see the witchdoctor, you will be given medicines which do not correspond with the disease.

Tafadzwa Nyakunda, aged 11: It might be that the disease that people have can't be healed at the clinic, diseases like being [be]witched; then you can go to the witchdoctor.

Wonder Chitsunge, aged 16: I know a young girl who got married when she was sixteen. She had a child called Tapfumanei. He became sick with a disease called 'scurf' [sic]. It is very painful. They went to the hospital with him but it didn't work. They went again to the hospital and the doctor told them to try traditional healers. ... The *n'anga* was called Tohupedza. ... They were greeted and they were given afternoon food. ... The n'anga started his work. My friend I was there ... I

Some families seek help from *n'angas*. Children are not always approving.



have seen what I have never seen in my life. He started to sing, and the soul of the dead came to him. The *n'anga* started talking. He said, 'It is good you have come. If you had left the child to sleep at home, tomorrow he would be dead. ... the disease is not of God, it is of witches.' He was saying this so that the girl's parents would be afraid. The child then died. This is where the story ends.

Prophets also provide alternative cures and treatments.

Rose Kamunidi, aged 11: I was sick. My side was hurting me. I went to the clinic and to see prophets. They told me that I have something on my side and they have to take it off. They prayed for me and prayed [over] water with coarse salt, and they washed my side with the water, and the disease was gone.

The *Vapostori* do not allow their children to be immunized.

Netsai, aged 11: The prophets pray for you with their hand on the top of your head and they give you water.

Health and work

When there is no health worker, or pre-school, children can suffer from neglect, or they may be looked after by a young sibling who does not go to school, or they go to the fields with their mothers.

Child labour is a contentious issue. The law[1] prohibits the employment of children under the age of twelve. But can the law be enforced if the parents require the child to 'help' in the field, or if the child wants to 'help' a parent? Many children often choose to work to earn money for their education or for the family. Over the age of twelve, the law is there to protect children that work.

Grace Gomani, aged 13: Some women work with their children on their backs even when it is raining.

Brightest Matope, aged 14: There are some children who work. They are grade sevens who couldn't go ahead with school, and they stay on the farm. They are paid at the end of the month, according to the days they have worked. They earn as much money as the elders do. They put chemicals on tobacco. Sometimes they are burning their faces when they are mixing chemicals.

Q. What do they do about it?

A. They go to health care to get some medicines or they wear plastics?

Norest Chigodza, aged 13: Children work when they have finished grade seven to earn money to go to secondary school. They will be putting fertilizer on the tobacco fields and, if they have been working the whole month, they earn $600.

Cloud John More, aged 15: When you are carrying tobacco on your head, if you fall down, you will get hurt.

Stanley Banda, aged 14: People at the farm work without safety clothes which is a health hazard.

Mike Josau, aged 16: There is a vegetable garden at the pre-school and the health workers look after it. ... The health worker is the most important person on the farm because if you get hurt you can be given medicine and you can be bandaged.

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[1] Statutory Instrument 72 of 1997 developed by the Ministry of Public Services, Labour and Social Welfare, states that children over the age of 12 may work provided that this does not prejudice the child's education, health, safety, social and normal development.

She also looks after young children and treats small hurts, and she sees if people are looking after the farm nicely.

January Dzikoma, aged 12: The health workers are advising us to dig rubbish pits and to always drink clean water.

Brighton Mateyo, aged 16: The health worker looks after babies when their parents go to work. She cooks food for babies, washes their clothes and sweeps the pre-school.

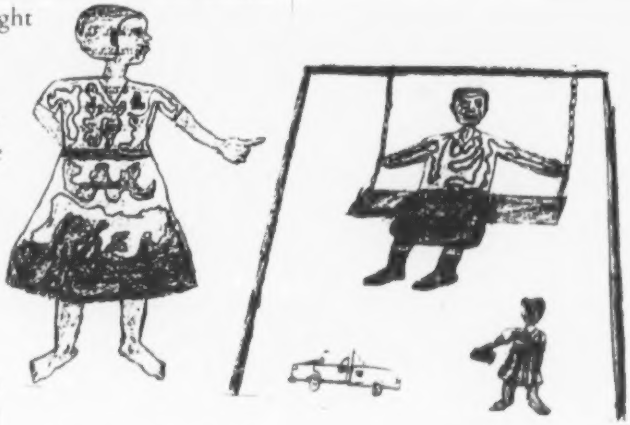
Abigail Levu, aged 14: The health worker gives you medicines like painkillers, cough mixture, medicine for diarrhoea and for wounds. She should be smart and kind. She should be able to read and write, and she is first taught by nurses from the clinic.

Katembei Kazhembe, aged 16: You can get condoms from the health worker. ... some do know how to use them, and some don't.

Michael Mujaji, aged 16: Our pre-school is nice because children are given porridge. When they are not given porridge, they will be given sadza or oranges.

Tarisai John, aged 13: The health worker who stays here listens to people's problems. She does everything she will be told. That's why many people like her. When a child doesn't go to school she wants to know the reason why he or she will be absent from school. When the child is sick she will give the child pills or medicines so that he or she will get well. And this will make people to like her. If you have done something wrong, for example if you have done the job wrong, she will tell the whiteman. The whiteman will then expel that person from work. The health worker stays at the pre-school the whole day playing with children. When the children use bad language she doesn't beat them. She will just talk to them. She is the person who does her job well and she is very kind. She teaches people about hygiene: to keep their toilets clean, clean the yard, to take a bath and to prevent diseases. When there are no medicines she goes to get some more in Centenary or Mvurwi. When the disease is getting more serious, she will take the patient to the hospital. When the toilets have fallen in, she went to tell the whiteman. She sees whether the drinking water

Accidents can and do occur, particularly as protective clothing may not be available or the rules about wearing it, not strictly enforced.



The health worker

is safe or not and also the food. After visiting the toilet, the children also have to wash their hands before touching food.

Falisters Muneri, aged 10: I want to find a rural area for them [my parents], buy clothes for them and food. Because they will be old and can't work, so they will have to stay in rural areas.

Dickson Tick, aged 14: I stay with my brother because my father has left work because he was very old. He went to the rural areas. ... My mother was told to stay here and work hard because we don't have a house yet [in the rural areas]. ... At the month-end my brother sends money and utensils to [my parents].

Advance, aged 13: There is another grandmother who used to work in the field on another farm. She was very old. The whiteman she worked for was very kind. He saw that she couldn't work and he gave her work to look after children. But right now I don't know where she is because she was refusing to go to the rural areas. She had two children and they tried their best for their mother to go to the rural areas but she was refusing. So that kind of person it is better to leave like that.

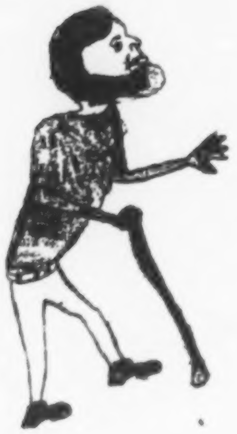
Isaac Magaso, aged 15: [There was a man] who used to work on the farm. He was given money for the years he has worked because he was old and he wasn't able to work [any more]. ... His brother came to take him to the rural areas. The *murungu* gave him a car to carry his things. The rural area was found by his son. The old man stayed there for many years cultivating with his younger brother. Then the old man died. I think the whiteman has to help old people by giving them food and shelter and other things they need in life.

Forget Mirrion, aged 13: There was a woman who was very old called Muchaneta. The whiteman, she used to work for, saw that she was old, and he went to the field and told her that work was over for her. The old woman started to cry because she didn't want to go to the rural areas. ... She used the money she was given by the whiteman, for the years she has worked, to go to Malawi.

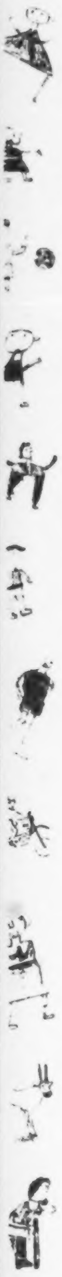
Takesure Taundi, aged 18: There was a man who worked as a foreman. He stayed at his work and he got old at his work. The whiteman saw that he couldn't work any more because he was going to work with a stick. ... The *murungu* told him to go to the rural areas and he was given money for the years he had stayed on the farm. The foreman refused, he said, 'I want to stay here, and my son will take over my

Age and retirement

Commercial farmers also adopt different policies on what to do with their retired employees. Some are allowed to stay on the farm, others have to leave, or feel they have to leave.



The farm owner gave him mealie-meal and relish and also money; clothes were bought for him. Then they found a place in the rural areas and he went there.
(Kudakwashe Tom, aged 17)

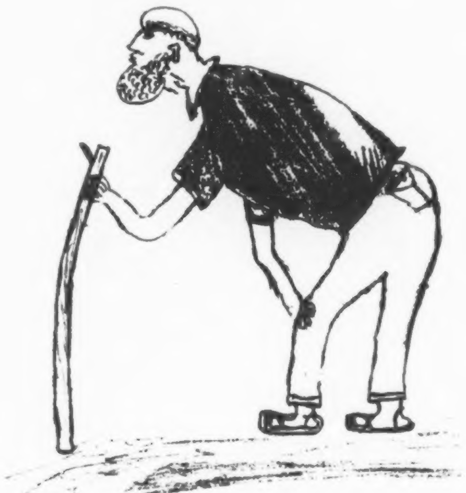


place'. The old man stayed with his son. He was given money by the whiteman every month because he had worked on the farm a long time. He then went to the rural areas and he died. I think old people's laundry has to be done for them, and water and firewood must be fetched for them.

Mary Thompson, aged 15: There was another grandfather who was very old. The whiteman asked him if he had a place in the rural areas. He said, 'I haven't even a wife and children. I don't have'. It surprised the farm owner to hear these words. He said, 'Work is over, you will see what you can do. Starting from today, I don't want to see you here', ... and he gave him a ride to the bus stop. What I think is that he was supposed to tell the old man to stay and do easy work. The person has to be given a little money because he is old.

Chengetai Zayeko, aged 17: ... a man who was very old. When he was given work to weed the fields it took him many days. ... there wasn't enough blood in his body. The whiteman told the foreman to suspend the old man ... I think they were supposed to look after this old man ... when he became powerless with farm work. I wish the whiteman had let him stay on the farm until he dies.

Kudakwashe Mutasa, aged 14: ... but rural areas are good because if you don't have one, when you are told that work is over, you won't have anywhere to go.



The job of the health worker

The Farm Health Worker programme was introduced to commercial farms in Zimbabwe in the early 1980s. Supported by Save the Children (UK) the programme involved the recruitment, training, support and monitoring of selected workers to assume a community health role on their farms. The emphasis was on preventive and basic palliative care. This model has become the basis of a natural programme on commercial farms, supported by a range of local and international NGOS, government departments, farm owners and workers. Yet despite its success there are still many communities on commercial farms who remain deprived of such a service.

Christine Vintula, aged 11:

A health worker is someone who is concerned about the well-being of the community, and committed to serving them.

The farm health worker needs support and respect of the farm community as a whole. This will make her or his job go nicely.

The role of health worker

1. To promote good health and to prevent illness in the community.
2. A health worker treats people.
3. A health worker keeps records of illness and birth.
4. A health worker reports dangerous diseases, e.g. cholera, malaria.
5. A health worker is a member of the Farm Development Committee (FADCO), e.g. when the water project started at our farm, Julia, our farm health worker played her role. Now people have clean water.

Home visits

Starting from 6 a.m. the farm health worker visits our homes.

At our farm, the health worker first visits the east section. She will be looking for rubbish pits, clean toilets, papers, soakaways and pot-racks.

From the east section she goes to the north section and from there she comes to the school and the pre-school, looking to see if the toilets are clean, and the yard.

The central section is the biggest part of our community. The health worker normally starts at 8 a.m. up to 9.30 a.m. This section is where the beerhall is located. In this section the health worker also looks for clean toilets, rubbish pits, papers and pot-racks.

The west section is the last section visited by the health worker. She will by now have all the information recorded in her record book and she will hand over the records to the owner of the farm. If anyone disobeys the health worker, he or she will be punished.

Health and hygiene education

The health worker teaches the whole community once every month on Saturday afternoon. She also holds classes with mothers. In the classes she advises mothers to keep their families well, e.g.

Advice

1. She advises mothers to use family planning methods.
2. The health worker encourages mothers to have their children immunized, e.g. against polio, measles and tetanus.
3. Mothers must go to trained traditional midwives for delivery of their babies.
4. Our health worker encourages communities to have their own gardens and advises mothers to provide a balanced diet for their families.
5. It's the job of the health worker to run the pre-school and check off the jungle gyms and toys.
6. She is the go-between between the owner of the farm and the community in terms of health services.

Nutrition food for the pre-school

At 9.30 a.m. the health worker breaks off to collect food for the pre-school. She is also the one who cooks the food at the pre-school.

At 12 noon the food is served to the children. Each child gets his or her plate and a spoon. They eat nutritious vegetables with sadza from Monday to Friday.

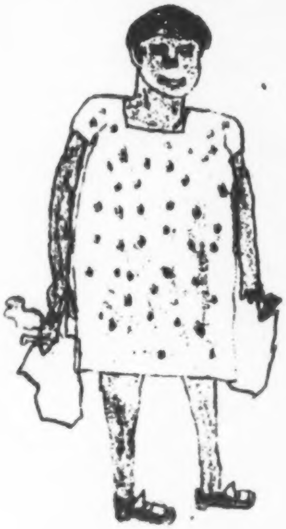
Sudden illnesses

For sudden illnesses the health worker should organize transport to the hospital. She must also go with the ill person to the hospital and make a report which she will hand over to the owner of the farm. This can be done at whatever time. Even at midnight the health worker must visit the ill person. If the situation of the person is not good, the health worker must then organize transport.

With the assistance of my teacher, Mr Mapfiro, and our health worker, Julia Coffee, I would like to say thanks to the person who introduced the Farm Health Scheme.

The work of the pre-school teacher

Over and above its support of health interventions on commercial farms, Save the Children (UK) also supported the establishment of pre-schools. This was to cater for the large numbers of vulnerable children deprived of parental care while their mothers were working. It also removed infant children from the hazardous conditions of the workplace, such as tobacco barns, where their mothers were often forced to bring them. The programme included construction of pre-schools, provisions of appropriate play equipment, and training of selected workers on the principles and practice of early childhood education. This model has also been incorporated in a national programme for farm workers.



Spelile Twice, aged 10:

The work of the pre-school teacher is very important for the life of the young children. Their aims are to prepare the children who will be going into grade one: looking after the young children and giving them simple work such as drawings, shapes and to know the colours. Another work for the pre-school teacher is to teach the young children good behaviour, give them good health food, and also to teach them how to do small pieces of work.

The ages of the children for the pre-school and why

The children who are supposed to attend the pre-school must be between four and six years old, because such an age can understand what the teacher will be saying. [They] can understand the importance of education. They will be not concerned about their parents at home, because they will be used to spend the whole day at the pre-school.

Morning time

Lessons which the pre-school teacher prepares for the children are drawings such as trees, fruits, vegetables, faces of people, houses, balls and snakes, etc.

Shapes

She teaches the children about shapes through drawings such as squares, rectangles, circles, half-circles, diamonds and triangles.

Colours

She teaches the children about colours through drawings, for example – red tomatoes, green apples, yellow bananas, blue birds, and white houses, etc.

Does a pre-school teacher give rest to the children?

Yes, the pre-school teacher gives rest to the children between 10:30 and 11:45 a.m. When they are resting the pre-school teacher provides dolls, toy cars and picture books. They play at cooking and with building blocks.

Sometimes on Saturday mornings from 10 to 11.30 a.m., the pre-school teacher and the pre-school children will have a walk in the bush. The aim is to help them to know different kinds of fruits and different kinds of wild vegetables and different kinds of insects. For example, fruits such as ***matamba, hacha, nhungu, tsubvu,***

matobwe, *bute* and *mazhanje*. Wild vegetables such as *mowa*, *kanzota*, *runi*, *derere*, *mudyakari* and *nyevhe*. Small insects such as ants, spiders, butterflies, lizards and beetles.

Crafts work for the pre-school children

Sometimes the pre-school teacher, Miss Gaudencia Chikuni, introduces craft work to the young children. She help them to make such things as clay pots, plates, toy biscuits, sweets, sugarbasins, paper hats, masks, beads, rattles and paper birds. This helps them in their future life when they grow up.

Outside lessons

Sometimes if they are outside they will be making flowerbeds and picking up papers around the crèche yard and also weeding if it is the rainy season.

How the pre-school teacher plans her work

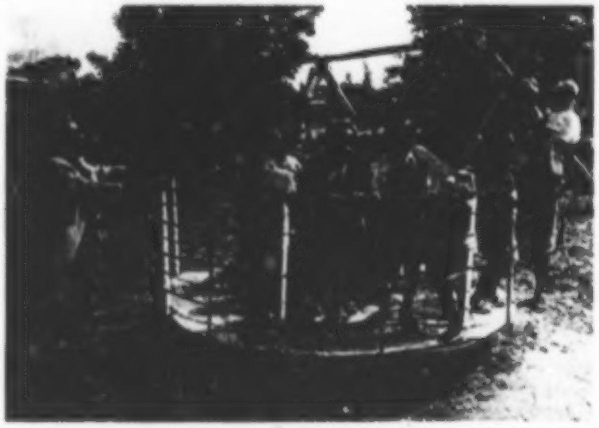
The pre-school teacher plans her work every day from Monday to Friday.

When it is lunchtime the pre-school teacher helps to dish out the food to the children. They break from 12:15 to 2:00 p.m.

Afternoon time

What they do in the afternoons

They will be doing general playing at the playground, e.g. see-saws, swinging, merry-go-round, walking on the bridge. When the children are tired they will rest in a thatched shade. They will be also be practising how to play soccer and netball. Sometimes they will be doing general music and dancing and also games for the entertainment of the children. Some will be practising shopping and clinic lessons in the classroom, and practising driving and parenting. They also play shooting with a toy gun.



Conclusion

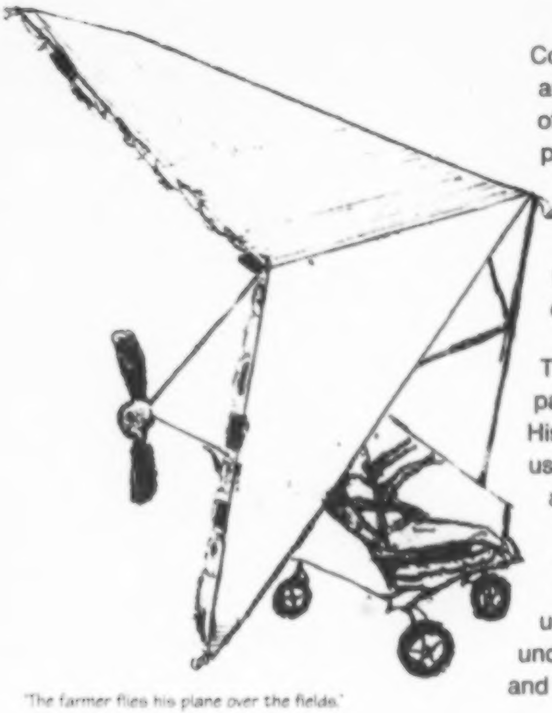
As a result we have seen that the pre-school teacher has an important role in the community by helping to develop the minds of the young children.

That is the end of my essay about the role taken by the pre-school teacher.

Mupurasi: our farm

Crops are very important because our parents work for the whites ... planting tobacco, maize and soya beans and when they grow they get sold. The money the whiteman gets from the crops is the one he used to pay the workers. Then our parents will buy us food and clothes. That's why I say crops have to be grown because if you just sit doing nothing, you will get nothing. For you to have money, you have to work.

Winnet Chimurara, aged 14



'The farmer flies his plane over the fields.'

Commercial farms in Mashonaland Central vary in size from between one and four thousand acres. Farm villages are situated in a non-arable area of farm land. They can house up to approximately 200 families or 1 200 people. These communities increase during the harvesting period when they are joined by the families of casual workers.

For the children of permanent workers, the farm is their home and they will identify with it as if it were their own, putting a value on its different aspects and identifying where improvements might be made.

The farmer – the owner – can be an awesome, remote, sometimes paternalistic figure, far removed from the day-to-day lives of the children. His house and its environs (swimming pool, tennis court, garden) are usually situated at a distance from the farm village and represent a distant and alien world.

Nonetheless the children are not unjudgmental; they recognise the contributions made by the farmer to their welfare, just as they understand his failure to do so. As we can see from their list of undertakings, they know what needs to be done to improve the farm village and the lives of the workers.

If the farmer is perceived as a remote figure, the manager and the foreman are not. Their occasionally autocratic, high-handed approach to farm labourers reveals the huge distance between them. Little human communication actually takes place between the managers and the labourers, let alone their wives and children.

The relationship between the managers and the workers on farms varies from the autocratic and remote, to the caring and responsible. It is not possible to generalize, though it is clear from the comments of these children, that managers who have a human democratic approach are appreciated.

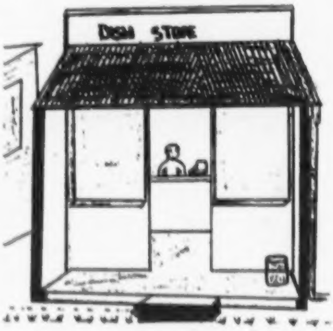
Aaron Batsirai and Benias, aged 14 and 17: I will first take my visitors to the school and show them everything. There are even teachers at the school [which has] grade one to grade sevens. The schoolchildren wear green uniforms. Then I will walk with them to the teachers' houses and I will show them the orchard. Then I will show them our parents' houses and their gardens. Next I will take them to the dam. That's where people fish and even the farm owner sometimes rides a boat. Then I will take them to the farm owner's home. There is a garden. He works with people nicely. The farm owner grows tobacco and flowers and many other things. And I will show them the fields. Last I will show them the store. ... Everything you want is there.

Winnet Chimurara, aged 14: I will tell my visitors that the school is important because if you want to be a doctor or look for a job, education is needed. And you can't go overseas if you can't read where the plane will be going. For people like President Mugabe and Border Gezi to be where they are is all about education. That's why people say, education is the wealth that I can leave for you ... so we children can be teachers, doctors, presidents and ministers.

Godfree Mutafa, aged 15: When visitors come to the farm, I will first take them to the *murungu's* office because he is the farm owner. Then I will take them to the whiteman's house because he is the one who makes people to survive and because he is also the boss. He works with people nicely. Then I will show [the visitors] something which is important on the farm which is the workers. They are the ones who make the whiteman get the money that will give them their salaries. Next I will show them the workers' houses because if there are no houses, there are no workers; and the workers' houses are very nice. Fourthly I will take them to the dam which supplies drinking water, because if there is no water, there are also no workers. The dam is very big and the water which comes from there has no diseases. Then I will take them to the pre-school, because that's where farm people

'If I were a tour guide ...'

Children live on a wide variety of different farms, not only in terms of what is grown but also in terms of their own accommodation, access to water, dams, schools, the farm store, etc. The following pieces reflect not only their own values and the pride they take in good facilities, but the unhappiness and awareness that they experience when this is not the case.



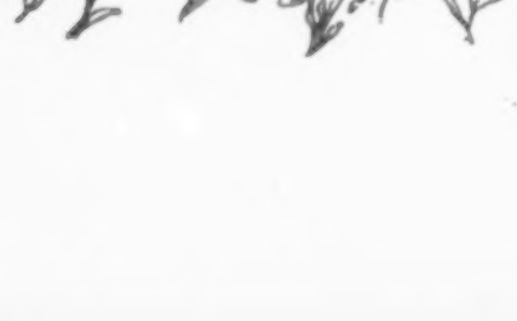
'The store is important because for you to go to work or to school, you have to eat. If there wasn't a store, things wouldn't be as easy. If it wasn't God who have made the store to be there, we would have been walking naked. And our life would not be good.' (Winnet Chimurara, aged 14)

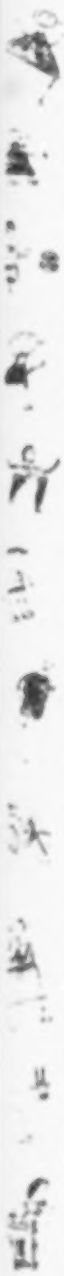
are taught to stay on a clean farm. Then I will take them to the soccer ground because if there are no sports on a farm, it won't make people happy. Then I will take them to the foreman's house, because if there is no foreman on the farm, work won't move on.

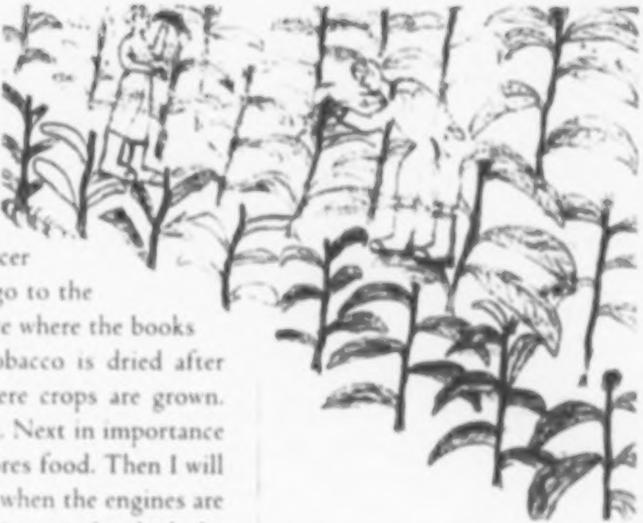
Albet Musona, aged 15: When visitors come to the farm, we will first show them the whiteman's house. You will walk facing north … . Then we will go to the office because that's where we are given our salaries. Then we will go to the dam because that's where our life is and where we get our drinking water. It is pumped by one big engine to the drinking tank and then there is another engine which pumps water for irrigation. Then we will go to the garage where things such as tractors, cars and many other things are repaired.

The soccer ground, where soccer is played is to the west. The compound [farm village] is to the north and the beerhall is to the west of the compound. Every Friday, people will be happy drinking. Then I will take them to the fields where tobacco, maize and cotton are grown. There are attractive mountains and animals such as hares, antelopes, monkeys and many others. Then we will go back to the sheds where tobacco is dried and graded. Afterwards we will go to the compound where we will see that there is a toilet in each house. Then we will go to the pre-school where young children are looked after when their parents will go to work. Next we will go to the east where [we will find] the gardens of people who stay on the farms and there are many vegetables such as rape, spinach and many others and there is a tap for watering. Then we will go to the horses that play different games [polo, racing, etc.]. And at last we will go to see many nice flowers.

Stewart Mickson, aged 14: First I will show the visitors the whiteman's house, telling them how it is and how it have seven rooms. After showing them the house, I will take them to the cattle paddock where the cattle stays and the troughs for their food. Afterwards we will go to the foreman's four-roomed house. Next we will go to the pre-school which is together with the beerhall, and then to the garage where tractors or cars are repaired. Then we will go to the fields, and where now tree are being cut down [to make] one big field. Then I will tell them about the toilets which are not hygienic – people just leave them like that. After talking about the toilets, we will go to the dam. At the dam there is an engine for putting water into the tractor.







Brightest Matepe, aged 16: First I will take the visitors to the clerk's house, because he is the one who deals with everything, and then we will go to the office because that is where everything is planned. Then I will show them the classrooms [in the school]. Then I will take them to the boreholes because they are important because that is where we get our drinking water. I will be walking, showing and telling them [about the farm] and we will go to the soccer ground where soccer and athletics are played. Next we will go to the whiteman's house because he is the farm owner, and the office where the books are kept. Next most important are the sheds where the tobacco is dried after harvesting. Next, the fields which I like because that's where crops are grown. They are ploughed by the people who work for the whiteman. Next in importance is the garage which stores machinery, and the store which stores food. Then I will take them to the dam where drinking water comes from, and when the engines are not working the mechanic does the work. The clerk's house is near the shed, the clerk himself writes down the names of the chemicals and the number of things which are needed. Gardens are done but the water is far away and always dirty.

Alice Mupambuza, aged 13: After showing visitors the school and the soccer ground, I will show them the livestock. We look after cattle, ostriches, sheep and horses. We look after them nicely giving them food and they are strong because we give them enough food. We want cattle to provide more milk. For us to get milk, we want you to see how we look after them on our farm. The whiteman [on our farm] is very nice, he teaches us many jobs.

Winnie Samuel, aged 14: First I will show the visitors our school, then I will take them to the butcher, the store, and the shed where we grade our tobacco. After that I will show you where we will kill our cattle, and the dam where we fish. Then we will go and look at the cattle-pens and the bird [poultry] coops. Then we will go to the compound and I will show you the supervisor's house, the tap where we fetch drinking water, the foremen's houses, the cook's house, the whiteman's yard and lastly the housemaid's houses. Then I will show you the block where the guards live. After that we will go to the pre-school where the young children play and [where they are given] porridge and milk. The health worker will put dolls on their backs and tie them. She teaches them hygiene so they can stay smart.

That's what our farm is like.

The farmer, the manager, the foreman and their wives at my farm

Farm management differs from farm to farm. Sometimes the farm is run by the farmer himself. Sometimes he employs a manager. In both cases, however, the day to day supervision is done by foremen. Lines of control are authoritarian and often backed by rewards and penalties. The latter are, of course, heartily disliked especially when they do not appear to be fair.

Nonetheless the happiness and well-being of the workers depends very much on the attitude and values of the owners, managers and foremen.

Tonias, aged 15: The farm owner doesn't stay here ... he does stay in Harare. This man has a hard heart. He does not listen to people's problems. But some things he does are liked by people ... which is to repair roads and toilets and he also helps the school. But he doesn't stay nicely with people, he uses immoral language at the workers and he also expels them from work for no reason. And the workers don't get salary increases. His job, when he comes from Harare, is to ride on a motorbike looking at his fields.

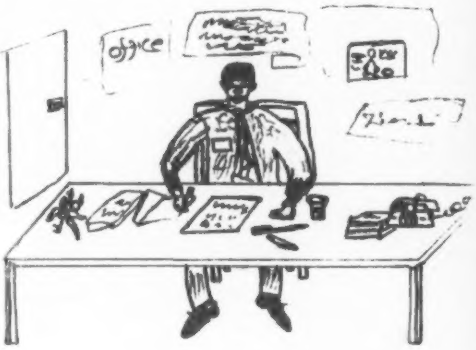
He uses irrigation to water his fields. In his fields he grows tobacco and wheat and many different things. He wears spectacles all the time as if he can't see, but he can. He just doesn't like to come and see his workers. He just comes when he doesn't have anything else to do. He is proud when he is walking. He doesn't even want his farm to be nice. He just put taps for drinking water only.

The manager's wife is very kind. She stays nicely with others and she is not cruel... She helps the people who need help and she also buys things in bulk and puts them in the store. The wife is different from her husband. He has a hard heart. He has also made people to work as *madhongi*. And he makes people sad and suspends them from work. He doesn't like to see you standing while others are working. He is always sad. He doesn't like to be happy with other people except the *murungu*.

Norest Nota, aged 15: The farm owner's wife is very kind in some things but in some she isn't. She is not fair to us when it comes to road transport. She doesn't like agriculture which gives [us] here a lot of money. She just grows tobacco only. Sometimes she grows maize when she thinks about it. His wife have started the pre-school so that children will know [something] when they go to school, but she is not giving the school enough support. She only cajoles the children with sweets. There is no hospital, not even a small one [on the farm]. ... If you say, 'Good morning' to her, she will say, 'No, I don't want to talk to you. Okay!' She just gives little money to help the school. The school ball have blown out long back ... but she just comes when she doesn't have anything [else] to do. ... But life is a burden, *kupenyu mutoro*, I concluded.

The manager's heart is hard like a stone. He doesn't care for people. He just does what he thinks is good. During the holidays, people will just work. People here don't know holidays. He wears a cap as if it is wartime. There is no borehole. People have come together to dig a well. On Christmas Day people are not given meat. During the rainy season, many people have died because of lightning. Now people don't have clothes, they wear sugar and meat plastics. There is no beerhall.

People were carried [away] by water in the river because of looking for beer [at the next door farm]. But you just hear the manager saying, 'That's their own look out!' Last week he made us children work with him. This is what I see [defines] a man with a hard heart.

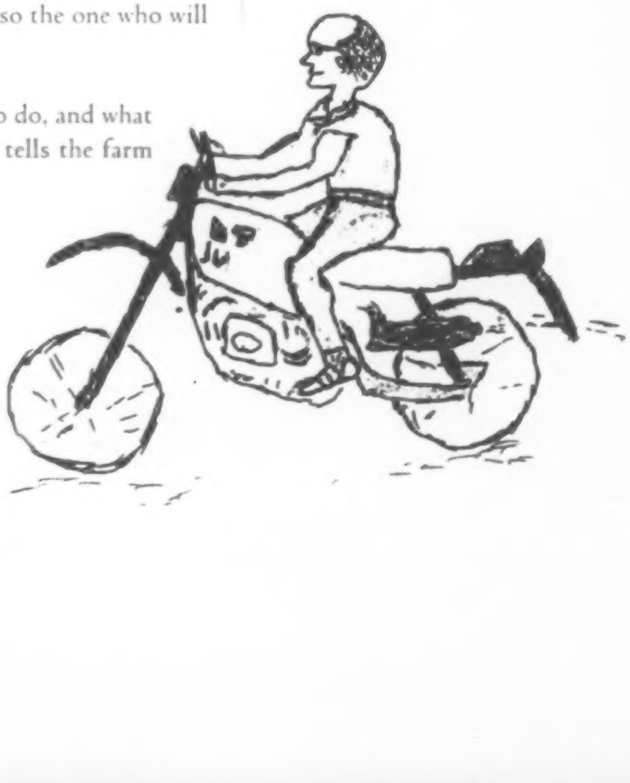


Justin Packet, aged 14: The farm manager lives nicely with others. He listens to people's problems very well. If you tell him you have a problem, he will tell the murungu. His job is to ride a motorbike to see if people are working nicely. He waits until you have finished work and then he will check whether everyone has come to work or not. When you have finished, your names will be written down. But this man also drinks beer a lot, and he is a liar. Sometimes he give you work to do and tells you, 'I'm going to give you money,' and when you have done the job and you ask for money, he will say, 'I will give you tomorrow,' but he won't until you have forgotten. But he [also] helps people because he has a car and he gives them rides to where they will be going. Another job he does is to see what will be grown that year, and when something is to be bought, the manager is the one who buys it. He is the one who wakes up very early and he also finishes his work very late.

Douglas Zhuwaki, aged 17: The manager receives phone calls. He is the one who sees if people are working. He also uses a computer. He is the one who is told all the work by the farm owner.

Simon Simon, aged 14: He is the one who gives the rules. He is also the one who will be told by the whiteman how crops are sold.

Tichaona Notice, aged 13: He is the one who tells the clerk what to do, and what work is to be done by people. And when things are needed he tells the farm owner.



Hey you foreman! Hey you foreman!
What exactly do you rely on?
Are your powers in the gun you are holding?
You make us wake up early in the morning
Without seeing where we go.
Kicking stones hurting our feet, scratching ourselves
How painful it is to work in tobacco and maize fields
What a terrible foreman
Early in the morning you wake us up
Shouting, go and look for lost cattle
I go and only come back very late
My legs pricked with sharp grass
My tears flowing like a river
How terrible are you foreman
Two weeks at the farm sounded like
A year. Money was not enough
We only eat meat once a year — *Tstitsi, aged 14*

Florence, aged 14: Our farm foreman likes doing his job very well. He also likes to work with people nicely because you are not supposed to be hated by people you work with. A foreman is not supposed to do the things that he is told by people [not to do] because if he does, the work will not go well. He is not supposed to be mad with people, otherwise they will end up hating him.

He does his job very well and even the farm owner likes the way he does the work because he is not harsh. He doesn't hate, he doesn't use immoral language, and he is kind. He is a trusted person when doing his job. If he tells people he works with what to do, and if they don't listen, he will tell the *murungu* or the manager to tell the whiteman. The person who doesn't listen might be suspended from work because he doesn't like to see people who are just standing, the ones who are lazy. The foreman is not supposed to be kind when doing his job. He has to be cruel, or else his work won't move.

Doesmatter Joasamu, aged 13: My father works as a foreman. He goes to work at 4 a.m. and he comes back at 8 a.m. [for breakfast]. He will be going from field to

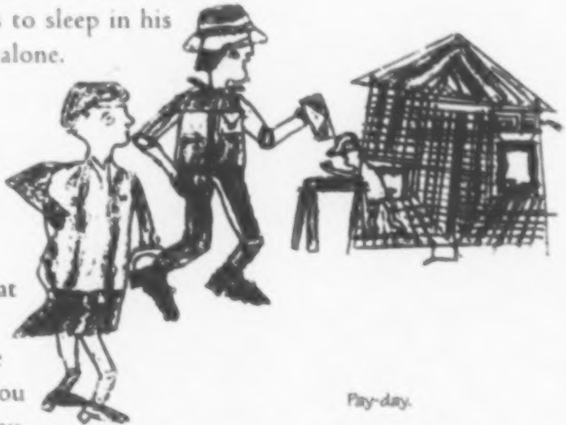
field and the fields are too many. Then he comes back to eat at 12 noon. He rides a motorbike. He carries pipes for irrigation. He moves the pipes from field to field. If you want to see him, you can see him at home not at work. I sometimes miss him.

Doben Brown, aged 16: In the morning my mother wakes up and makes a fire, then she warms water for washing faces. Then she prepares food. After eating my father goes to work. He comes back at 12 o'clock to eat sadza. When he has finished eating he sleeps for a while. At 2 p.m., he goes back to work. When it is nearly finishing time, he will tell the workers to hurry up so that when the whiteman comes and asks if the job is well done, he only says, 'It is going well'. He tells the workers to hurry up, that there are only a few minutes left, and to prepare to go home. If it is nearly 6 p.m., he will tell the workers to stop, and each and every worker will be waiting for tomorrow's work, saying, 'Today let us sleep'.

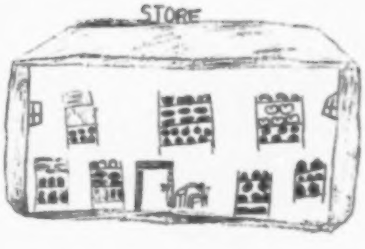
Patience Faindani, aged 14: My father wakes up at 5 a.m. and starts calling for those standing near the firewood. Then he washes his face and sits at the table and starts to eat sadza. After eating he puts on a dustcoat and boots. My father is a foreman. He will be working with the women. When he has finished work it is around 12 [o'clock]. When he reaches home he will eat sadza with chicken. When he has finished eating at 2 p.m. he calls people and they go to the field. They carry *jeko* and will be cutting grass. When it is 5 p.m. they will come home. Then he will take water from the fire and take a bath. Then he rubs some lotion and combs his hair, and goes to water the garden. He also plants some maize. When he has finished, he sits on the sofa and starts eating. Then he takes the Bible and starts reading. When he has finished reading he goes to sleep in his bedroom. He doesn't have anyone to talk to because he sleeps alone. Mother is in the rural areas.

Nyasha Taderera, aged 12: The foreman doesn't want people to stand [still]. He wants them to keep on working so that they can sweat.

Norman Mudhoni, aged 15: The advantages of being a foreman are that you spend the whole day walking up and down. The work is not hard. You will be looking at what people are doing. You will be given clothes and shoes. You will be given a lot of money, and you will be given a bonus. The disadvantages are that people will hate you.



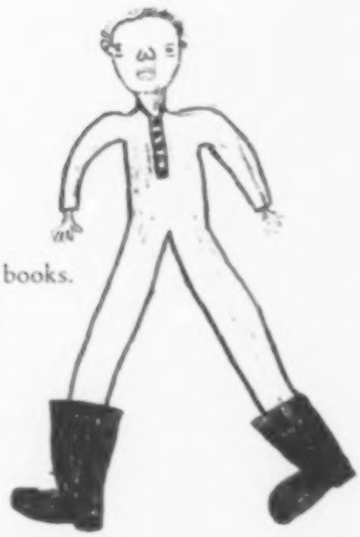
Pay-day.



If I were A FARMER

The children know what could be done to improve their lives

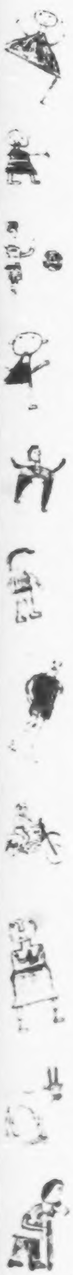
If I were A FARMER



I would build houses.
I would make roads.
I would build toilets.
I would build showers.
I would build a clinic.
I would make sure that the schoolchildren had books.
I would let them send their children to school.
I would give people seeds to plant.
I would give them fields for planting.
I would give them fertilizer.
I would give them milk.
I would make sure that the pump works.
I would make sure that they had good teachers.
I would repair the gates and make sure that there are gates to all the fields.
I would have a store and a butchery for the workers.
I would grow maize, wheat, groundnuts, beans, soya beans, peas, oranges, cotton.
I would give the workers boots to wear in the fields.
I would give them anti-malaria pills.
I would grind mealie-meal.
I would have a bar.
I would look after people very well.

Cherish Dangarembizi, aged 12 and Garikai Dennis, aged 13: If I were the farmer, I would grow maize, cotton, soya beans, sugarcane, sunflowers and paprika. I will grow my crops and sell them at the marketing boards. When I get the money, I will pay my workers. I will build houses and toilets for my workers. The money which will be left, I will use it to put taps and electricity in my workers' houses. The maize that will be left, I will send it to the mill.

I will plough [again] and then buy tractors, hoes, ploughs and a lorry to take the crops to the market. I will build more houses for the workers that will be coming. I will build a pre-school and a school for the children. And I will buy books, pens,



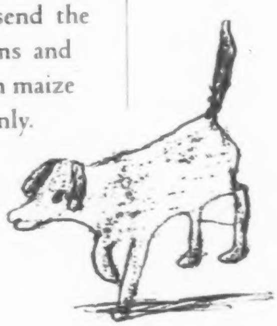
pencils and school uniforms for the children. I will build a church hall and buy sewing machines for women, and material for them to use. And I will look for school teachers.

Safeguy Mathewson, aged 13 and Thompson Munyarirwa, aged 14: If I were the farm owner, the workers would work as my children. I would give them more money than any other farm. I will care for them like an egg. I will build a hospital and schools, and I will give them mealie-meal three times a day. I will send [the children] to school for free.

[To make money] I will sell my grains to the Grain Marketing Board. ... I will also sell livestock. And I will get money through growing cotton, maize, tobacco, soya beans, and sugar cane. I will be keeping horses, chickens, pigs, cattle and goats. I will build a store and be selling different things.

Allistar Tuesday, aged 12 and Bernard Chazika, aged 12: If I were the farm owner, I would give people money so that they can survive. I will send their children to school for free and I will pay school fees for them. I would grow maize, tobacco, soya beans, white cotton, potatoes and roses to get money. I will build nice houses and when I have sold my crops, I will give them money. I will give them transport that they can use for going to sports. I will look after cattle and sheep and then sell them so that I can get money to pay my workers. I will give them more money, so that they can work hard. I will build a store and bathing room with showers.

Cephas, aged 12 and Elliot, aged 13: If I were the farm owner I would grow potatoes, maize, wheat, cotton, soya beans, sugarcane and groundnuts. I would build houses and toilets and put in electricity and taps. They would work nicely without problems. And I would give them money after two weeks, and at the month-end. I would give them mealie-meal, relish and cooking oil. I would help them with transport when going to hospital when they are seriously ill. I will send the children to school and pre-school, and I will buy them school uniforms and many other school items. I would give my workers fields to grow their own maize and I will give them vegetable gardens. That is what I can do for them only.



Our work

'I work for your and my life to go ahead.'

Emeline Nhamoinesu, aged 14

'We want to grow up knowing that life is working and without work there is no life.'

MacDonald Company, aged 15

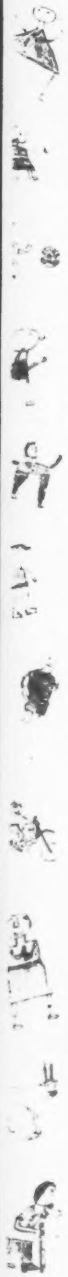
'Farm people work as horses. Work which was done by men is now being done by women.'

George Chipende, aged 13

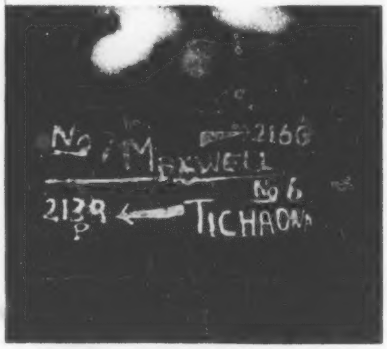
Commercial farms are agri-businesses. They can employ between 40 and 200 permanent workers depending on the size of the farm and the nature and variety of the crops grown, and the degree to which the crops are processed before being sent for sale. They also employ seasonal and casual workers. In Mashonaland Central the majority of farms grow a variety of crops such as: tobacco, maize, winter wheat, roses, paprika, oranges, seeds; dairy and beef cattle are also kept, and horses for breeding and pleasure. Intensive horticulture is also practised.

The work done by farm workers now falls into thirteen grades and covers a range of approximately 200 jobs. The salary range does not reflect great differences in terms of responsibility and varies from $1 000.43 to $1 424.44 per month. The children's descriptions of the jobs done by their parents indicate the range and variety of employment, and the hours worked. Long hours of physical labour can impact adversely on the household, leaving little family or recreational time. Although the children may not be aware of all the implications and responsibilities of a job, their insights are revealing. For example, the issue of clothes and soap demonstrates the straitened circumstances of many households.

While there is clearly a hierarchy of employment on farms, there are few means whereby the farmworkers can develop their own skills. Foremen, clerks, health workers, teachers, drivers and mechanics are seen to have the best jobs; these positions will remain inaccessible to most workers.



The situation of retired workers is precarious. At best they are entitled to 1.33% of their monthly insurable income for each year of service, up to a maximum of thirty years. Thus an employee at the top grade, after thirty years of service, would be entitled to $568 a month. It is a very small minority of farmworkers who would achieve either this grade or this length of service.



Working the lines.

The Workers' Committee and Farm Workers' Development Committee have allowed for discussion, and the situation of workers has improved over the years on some farms. Much still needs to be done in terms of access to training, retirement pensions, provision of adequate housing, water and sanitation, health care and education.

Commercial farms account for approximately 40 per cent of Zimbabwe's foreign exchange earnings. Farm labour provides a major contribution to the national economy, and more needs to done to ensure that this is recognised and rewarded.

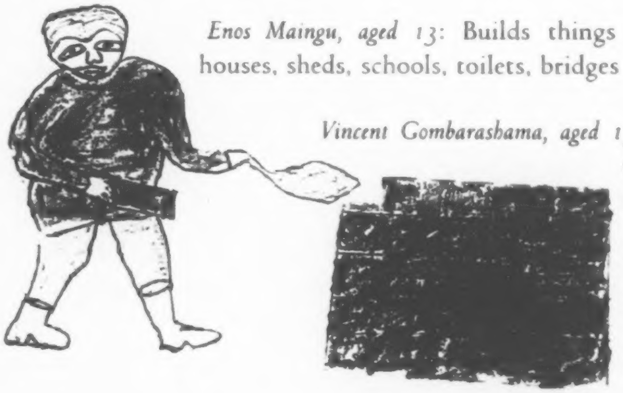
Many different forms of employment take place on the farms. The list below reflects the jobs that were identified by children in two schools. This is not a comprehensive list as the range and variety of jobs varies from farm to farm and from area to area. Similarly, the particular responsibilities of each job will vary according to the requirements of the farm owners and managers. The role of the guard, for example, differs noticeably from farm to farm, and some farms may not employ guards at all. The conditions and hours of work are also widely variable. As a result, parents often see little of their children. Terms such as 'herdboy', 'shootboy', etc. are the children's own and do not reflect the age or the experience of the worker.

Builder

Margaret Kanengoni, aged 13: 'Builders build houses in the compounds, sheds on the farm, and they paint houses.

Enos Maingu, aged 13: Builds things on the farm such as houses, sheds, schools, toilets, bridges and many other things.

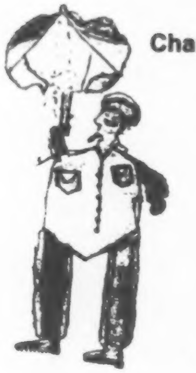
Vincent Gombarashama, aged 13: Builds things which would [other-wise] fall down.



Carpenter

Simon Simon, aged 14: He makes furniture such as wardrobes, chairs and many other things.

Itai Enoch, aged 14: My father wakes up at 5 o'clock and picks up his working tools. He is a carpenter. He makes chairs and tables and also wooden spoons. When he is working he uses an *mbezo*, nails and an axe. When he has finished, he will sell them. He brings home the few things he has left. The money he gets from selling, he uses to buy his tools, his clothes and ours.



Chauffeur

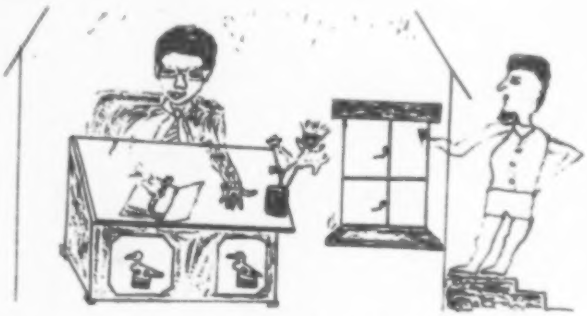
Willard Willard, aged 13: My father's work is to drive for the whiteman, taking him everywhere he wants to go. But if [the old man] doesn't want to go, he [my father] will go himself. His work is to carry the old man into the garden. Sometimes he will be helping in the whiteman's garden. On Friday he goes for shopping. He doesn't come home for lunch, food is prepared there. The problem is that when [my father] wants to go somewhere [for himself], he won't be allowed because when the old man gets sick, there won't be anyone to take him to the hospital, and the old man is sick all the time.

Clerk

Lloyd Pakati, aged 13: The clerk works in an office and also writes down the salaries of the workers.

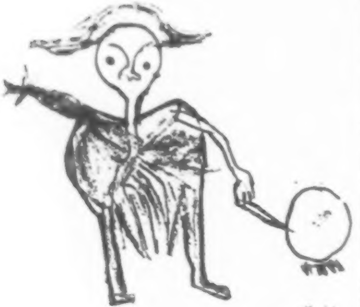
Cook

Simon Simon, aged 14: The cook, cooks for the whites.



Hamundide Maodzwa, aged 13: My grandmother takes a bath at 6 a.m. then she gets dressed and goes to work. First she does the laundry and cleans the house and then she does the cooking. When it is 12.30 p.m. she comes back to cook for us, and at 1.30 p.m. she goes back to work. She finishes at around 5 p.m. after cooking [for supper].

Gilbert Mangasau, aged 15: My mother wakes up and prepares food for the children, then she goes to work. She will be cooking food for the whites. Then she will come back to cook sadza for us to eat after school. When we get home, she will be at work. When we reach home, we eat the sadza that mother has cooked for us. After eating we warm bathing water for mother and father when they come home from work when it will be dark.



Dairy worker

Tapiwa Chakoma, aged 18: When we want milk, we use a machine and after we have finished getting the milk, we put it in tins. Then we put the milk in a cold room where there is a fridge. Then it will be taken to be sold in towns. Our cattle are very good because we don't take them for grazing, we feed them with meal and cubes. That's what makes a lot of milk

Dairy stores

Tatenda Marisa, aged 12: My mother sells milk after milking with the other boys. A few days ago the boys left the cattle in the forests. The workers start at 6 a.m. and they finish at 9 a.m. They go back to work at 2.15 p.m. and finish at 4 p.m. The problems are that the boys my mother works with leave the cattle in the forests and when they are told to go and collect them, they refuse. They also steal milk when my mother comes home.

Driver

(tractor, car and lorry drivers)

Margaret Kanengoni, aged 13: They take the workers to their jobs. They take the crops to the selling places. They plough the fields. They deliver fertilizer, soil and water-pipes to the fields. They harvest crops. They repair the roads.

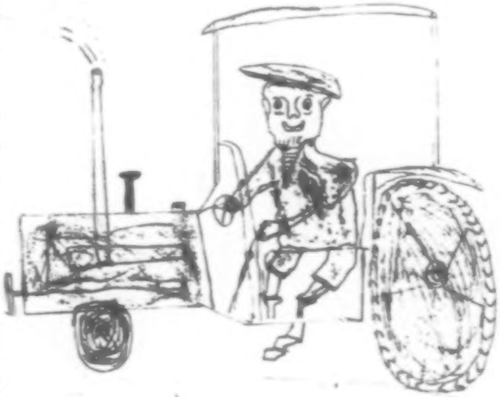
Edmore Dijas aged 15: The advantages [of being a tractor driver] are that you earn a lot of money and you will be given an overall. The disadvantages are that the oil will make your clothes dirty. You drive a tractor without anything to cover you or to prevent the sun, or rain, or water from you. If [the tractor] collides, you can get hurt. The tyres make dust when [the tractor] is moving.

Simon Simon, aged 14: The tractor driver carries firewood for drying the tobacco.

Brian Kachidza, aged 14: The advantages are that you will be driving most of the time and you will sit on a comfortable seat. The disadvantages are that you get tired of just sitting. And if you are not good at driving you will have a collision.

Dickson Tick, aged 14: The good thing is that when you drive to other farms, you learn different farming methods. The bad thing is that you will work on Sundays when others are happy and enjoying themselves. Your clothes get torn quickly because of the oil, and you will be using too much soap because of the grease.

Takedza Mukonzo, aged 15: My father wakes up at 5 a.m. He takes a bath, brushes his teeth and carries African tea with him. Then he goes to work. Firstly he checks whether the vehicle is okay. Then he starts it and he goes

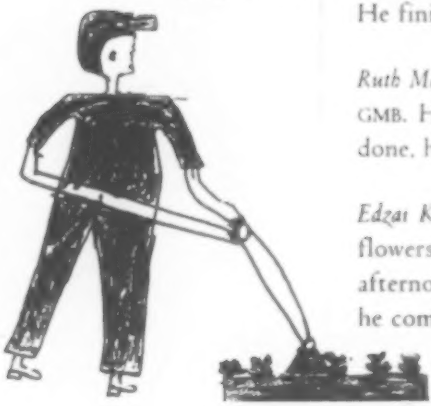


to carry some flowers [from the fields]. He comes back home at 6 p.m. He doesn't take holidays. He works every day. Sometimes he refuses to go to work in the mornings [if he returns very late from town].

Roren Mutika, aged 13: My father goes to work every day at around 6 a.m. Sometimes he will be ploughing, and sometimes he will be planting wheat or soya beans and sometimes he will be putting chemicals and fertilizers on the fields. He goes for breakfast at 9 a.m. and lunch at 12 noon and he goes back to work at 1.30 p.m. He finishes work at 5 p.m. and he does household chores when he comes home.

Ruth Makwinja, aged 14: My father is a car driver. He will be taking grains to the GMB. He even carries sick people to the hospital. When none of this has to be done, he will be an electrician, a carpenter or he can repair things.

Gardener



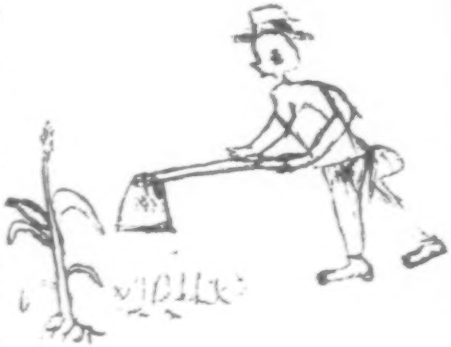
Edzai Kogamber, aged 13: My father arrives early in the morning. He looks after flowers and then he cuts the lawn. After that he works on different jobs. In the afternoon, he goes to cut the lawn in the compound and waters the flowers. Then he comes back and starts watering the boss's vegetables. The following morning he wakes up early to water the lawn and flowers. Then he starts digging the flower-beds and makes the compost. Then he takes a rest.

Rambisai Kapomba, aged 14: The good thing is that you will be given clothes to wear, and when the vegetables are ready to be eaten, you can take some to your home.

General worker

A. Majaira and J. Choga, aged 15: My father is a general worker. He gets up at 6 a.m. and puts on his overalls and gumboots and then he goes to grade tobacco and he remains standing until 9.30 a.m. break time. He proceeds grading at 10 o'clock. He always finishes his work when he has nine scales. That is their limit of grading. At 12 exactly, he comes for lunch which is one hour and thirty minutes. From 1.30 to 5 p.m. he is grading. When he comes home he goes to sleep because he is tired.

Vhadbusha Zeka, aged 15: My father is a general worker. He gets up early at 5.30 a.m. and he makes sure his tools are ready.



Before he goes to work he puts on his overalls and he eats food. Sometimes he carries other food for breakfast. He starts work at 6 a.m. and he comes back for lunch at 12. Then he goes back to work at 1 p.m. If he comes back by 4 p.m., he starts making shoes because he is a cobbler. When he makes shoes the owners of the shoes pay him money first.

Groom

Oliver Kasvara, aged 17: My father works in the stables. He goes to work at 6 a.m. He comes home for lunch at 12 noon and goes back to work at 2 p.m. There are about fifty horses on the farm. He feeds them at 4 p.m. There are eight workers [in the stables]. They earn $800 a month.

Guard

Lloyd Pakati, aged 13: The guard looks after things such as dams, maize fields and sheds, and the work is important.

Tichaona Notice, aged 13: He is the one who protects property, and when the farm owner has gone away, he looks after his house.

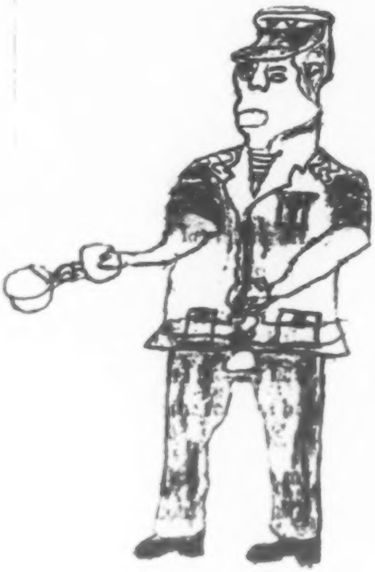
Constance Nota, aged 13: My father looks after maize so that it won't be stolen. If the maize is stolen he will be expelled from work. In the afternoon he comes home to eat sadza. When it is 1.30 p.m., he goes back to work. When he goes back, he walks around the fields looking to see if any animals are eating the maize. Some days he goes to the game park to see if all the animals are there. He counts them and writes the number down and takes it to the whiteman.

Tavonga Tapera, aged 13: My father works in the afternoon and evening, and when they exchange [duties] he comes home. He rests in the morning. In the evening, we cook sadza and take it to our father's work and we come back to sleep at home.

Simon Simon, aged 14: The guard will arrest you when you have stolen on the farm. He is given a gun and a stick.

Brian Kachidza, aged 14: The good thing is that you can work in the afternoon and you will have a stick and a chain. The bad thing is that when it rains ... you can get sick because of the rain, and you can be bitten by a snake.

Primrose Muchenje, aged 14: The advantages [of being a guard] are that you are given overalls and a gun, and you have different duties, night duty or day duty and you change. The disadvantages are that if you are on night duty, a thief can kill you.



Shepherd Mapfumo, aged 13: The job is good because you will be walking up and down and you can rest when you want to. And when you see people fishing, you can take the fish. It is bad because when something is stolen, you will be asked where you were, and you will be expelled from work. You won't be given food or a bonus payment.

Margaret Kanengoni, aged 13: A guard goes to his job at six in the morning. He looks after the goods on the farm. ... It is good because nobody can steal, but it is not good because people can kill you. For example if you are guarding the dam, people can kill you to be free to fish in that dam. You finish work at six in the evening.

Grinding mill operator

Smart Thomas, aged 15: My father works at the grinding mill. He goes to work when others don't. He wakes up very early for two days. He will be grinding different things.

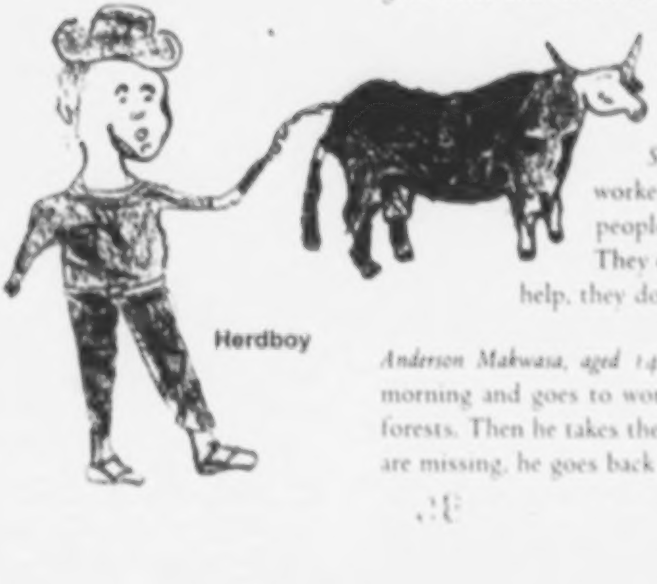
Tichaona Notice, aged 13: They grind people's maize to mealie-meal.

Health worker

Vincent Gombarashama, aged 13: She treats people when they are sick and gives them medicines. She looks after children when their mothers' have gone to work.

Oriana Zvomarima, aged 15: My mother wakes up early in the morning. She does all the household chores. She cooks her breakfast and then she goes to work at 8 a.m. When she arrives she cooks sadza while playing with the children and when the sadza is ready she serves them and then she washes the dishes. At 11 a.m. she goes home and she doesn't go back because she would have finished for the day. She goes home and she does all the household chores. When she has done them, she can even lie down. There are thirty-five children at the pre-school. They will be eating guavas, bananas, sugar-cane and mangoes.

Stanley Viola, aged 15: The good thing about being a health worker is that you can keep the farm clean. You will be helping people and you will give bandages to people who will be hurt. They only work when someone is hurt or sick. If no one needs help, they don't work.

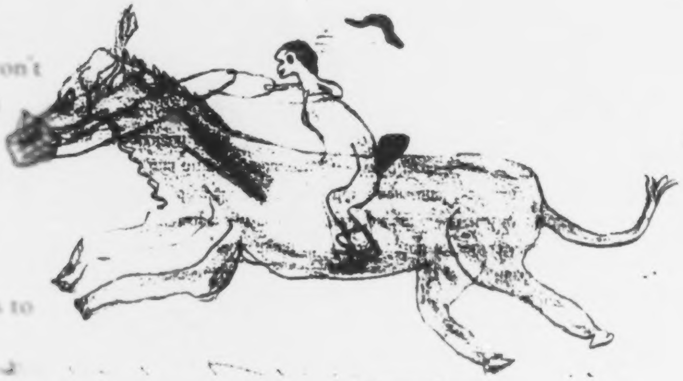


Herdboy

Anderson Makwasa, aged 14: My father is a herdboy. He wakes up early in the morning and goes to work. He rides a horse and goes to look for cattle in the forests. Then he takes the cattle to the dip tank and he counts them. When some are missing, he goes back to the forests looking for them. When it is 12 p.m. he

comes back home. He goes back to work at 12.30 p.m. then he puts the cattle in the paddocks. After that he takes the one with the calves and he takes them to the dip tank. At 5 p.m. he comes back home.

Oliver, aged 15: A cow boy is someone who looks after cattle, and he also makes fencing.



Horseboy

Beaular Chemukanga, aged 13: The job is nice because you won't be told by anyone that you have done wrong and you don't have a lot to do. If you want to, you can take some milk; you can take as much as you want. The job is bad because people will say that you smell of cattle dung. They will laugh at you for looking after cattle.

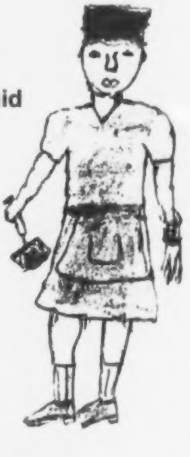
Talent Zanamwe, aged 13: My father is a horseboy. He goes to work at 7 a.m. He comes for tea at 9 a.m. and he goes back at 10 a.m. He comes for lunch at 12 o'clock and goes back to work at 2 p.m. He finishes work at 5 p.m. When he is at work, he uses wheelbarrows, shovels and many things. When he comes back from work, he will be saying, 'I am tired'.

Horticulture worker

Judith Nyarai, aged 13: When my mother goes to work, she will be packing flowers and putting them in boxes. The flowers will be going to Harare and they will be used to make body lotions. … the job is easy just packing flowers and putting them in boxes. She works in a room called a cold room. Others work in plastic-made sheds which are made up of poles.

Housemaid

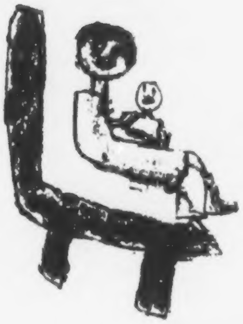
Hamunyare Brumbu, aged 14: My mother goes to work at 6 a.m. She comes back from work at 12 for lunch. She stays at home until 3 p.m. and then she works again until 6 p.m. She does the laundry, making beds, cleaning, cooking and all the household chores.



Babra Julius, aged 13: My mother wakes up early in the morning to do work. She sweeps the yard with a broom and she wears a *dhuku* on her head. After she has finished sweeping, she washes the dishes. Then she takes a bath, and then she goes to work. My mother is a housemaid. When she goes to work she wears shoes, a red dress and a kerchief for her head. My mother is admired by the *murungu*. He says that she works nicely. Sometimes she plays with the *murungu's* children. After

She has cooked for them, she cooks food for us. When the time is ready, she comes home at 5 p.m. That is the work which is done by my mother every day.

Shaine Chipapika, aged 13: My mother wakes up early in the morning at 4 a.m. She washes the dishes, makes a fire, makes tea and she warms water for washing hands. We wake up late and take a bath and then have some tea. My mother wears a red uniform and white shoes. When she gets into [their] house, she starts to cook, then she washes the dishes, and then she cleans the house. Afterwards she serves coffee to the *varungu* in their offices. Back in the whiteman's house, she makes the beds, does the laundry, sprays perfume on the clothes and puts them in the wardrobe. Then she comes back home to eat food that would have been cooked by my sister. If there is too much oil in the food, my mother will bite her tongue.



Housewife

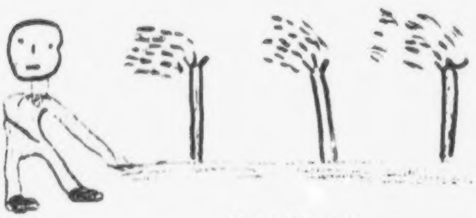
Majaira Choga, aged 15: The job is good because you will eat things which will be left by whites. You earn more money and you will be given things for free. You will always stay smart, and you will be given uniforms. It is bad because you work from Monday to Sunday without resting. You also wash the dog blankets. If something is missing you are the one who gets into trouble. If the whiteman's child tear or burn some clothes, they will say, 'Why have you let the kid do that?'

Venetia Akison, aged 14: My mother wakes up at 6 a.m. and prepares food for us to eat before coming to school. When she has finished cooking she goes to fetch some water. She will wear her old clothes: a dress, a kerchief, a cloth and sandals. Starting from the morning, she searches for relish and bathing water. My mother doesn't work. She stays on the farm, knitting. When it is almost sunset, she goes to fetch water to drink in the evening. When we have come back from school, we wash our bodies and also wash the dishes that have been used in the afternoon, and then we will be given food for the evening. This is what my mother does every day.

Irrigation worker

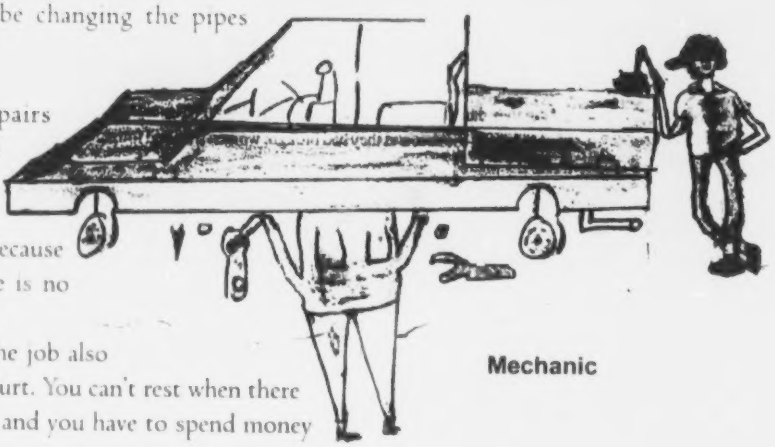
Margaret Kanengoni, aged 13: Crops are watered by irrigation. Workers have time to rest and you come home early. The disadvantages are that if the pipes have been broken, you can be drowned by water; and if you are working at night, you can meet wild animals.

Brighten Meaty, aged 16: The advantages of [working in irrigation] are that the job pays a lot of money. You will be given an overall, boots and gloves. The disadvantages are that you work very early in the



Moving the pipes.

morning, and you will be cold, and you will be changing the pipes during the night.



Margaret Kanengoni, aged 13: A mechanic repairs engines, repairs cars and motor-bikes, makes scotch carts and does welding.

Lovemore Ben, aged 15: Being a mechanic is good because you will be repairing things. You rest when there is no work. You don't have a foreman and you work under the shed. You are given working clothes. The job also pays a lot of money. What is bad is you often get hurt. You can't rest when there is a lot of work. The job makes your clothes dirty and you have to spend money always buying soap.

Mechanic

Obert Kanoka, aged 17: The advantage is that you are given boots and a helmet.

Rashid Morris, aged 12: My mother's work is to select the papers which will be used for wrapping roses. Sometimes she cuts roses. She goes to work in the morning at 6 a.m. She finishes at 5 p.m. She cuts the papers using scissors. When there are no papers to be done they come back home. When there are few roses left, one person will stay at home for four weeks, and another will work for four weeks. They do this until the roses are many again. Sometimes they cook for children in the pre-school. My mother is also a writer for the workers' committee.

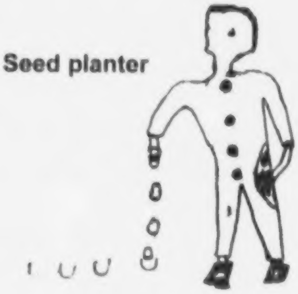
Rosecutter

July July, aged 15: The good things are that your boss gives you a cloth to wear for that job. If our boss say grade beans and you finish in good time, you will [be given] a cup of beans to eat at your home. The bad thing is that you work in June when there is cold weather. You go to grade for many hours without lunch or a break. The seeds have dust and you suffer from flu.

Seed grader

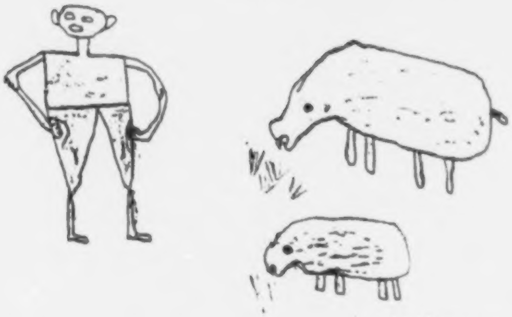
Jeremiah Ndlovu, aged 14: My father wakes up at 5 a.m. He washes his face, spreads lotion on it. Then he eats. He goes to work at 6 a.m. He sows some tobacco seeds. At 9 a.m. he has his breakfast. At 9.30 a.m. he goes back to the fields and starts sowing more seeds. He comes for lunch at 12 noon and eats sadza. Then he goes to [our] garden to water vegetables. At 2 p.m. he goes back to work and he comes home at 5 p.m. He takes a bath and spreads lotion on his face. At 7 p.m. he eats sadza and he goes to bed at 4 p.m.

Seed planter



Hellen Dombo, aged 15: The advantages [of being a maize planter] are that you wear overalls and you finish work in good time. The disadvantages are that you will be beaten by the sun in the fields. You won't be given gloves to wear. You don't have time to rest and the job gives few money.

Shepherd



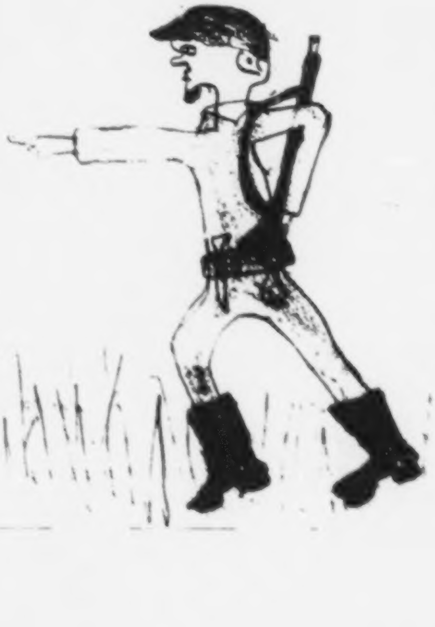
Mathias Magaba, aged 15: Planting maize is good because you can learn skills in case you go to the rural areas. It is bad because you can touch chemicals that you are not supposed to use, and the money is few.

Tarisai Chambukiro, aged 12: My father wakes at 5 a.m. and he has some tea. Then he goes to work. He opens the kraal so the sheep can eat grass. When the sheep have finished eating grass, he takes them back to the kraal. After that he comes home to eat sadza. After eating, he goes to plant some maize in the field. Then he goes back to open the kraal at 4 a.m. When the sheep get sick, a vet will come to treat them. When they get too many, the *murungu* will kill some of them. If they are lost, they will be looked for until they are found.

Shootboy

Robson Mbofana, aged 18: The advantages [of being a shootboy] are that when you have killed an animal, you will be given the meat. Even when the meat is sold, you will be given the money. But the disadvantage is that when something is stolen, you have to pay.

Vincent Gombarashama, aged 13: The shootboy looks after fields [crops] so they won't be eaten by wild pigs.



Spanner boy

Tichaona Notice, aged 13: He is the one who is sent to get things such as hammer, spanners and many other things [for the mechanic].

Storekeeper

Simon Simon, aged 14: They sell different things in the store.

Teacher

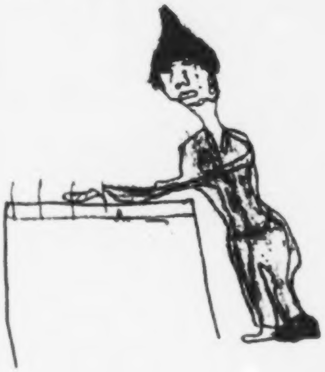
Simon Simon, aged 14: They teach children so that they can have success in life.

Tichaona Notice, aged 13: They teach children how to write and read.

Headmaster

Nyasha Taderera, aged 12: He tells teachers how to treat pupils nicely especially grade sevens, so that they can pass their exams.

Tobacco grader



Shaudhai Viola, aged 13: My father works in the tobacco shed. He starts work at 6 a.m. He will be taking tobacco and putting in into bails. [His hours are: 6 - 9 a.m.; 9.30 - 12; 1 -5 p.m.]

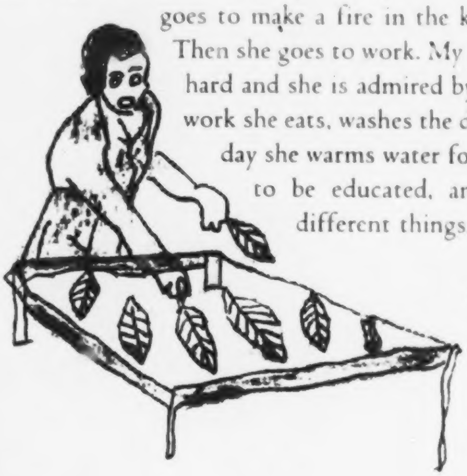
Tawanda Nyakusengwa, aged 14: The advantages are that you will be given clothes to work in once a year. The disadvantage is your back hurts because you are carrying tobacco bales, and the job gives you a headache. But if you get hurt, you will be given money.

Tichinayo Phanuel, aged 13: The tobacco dust can get in your eyes and it can make you sick.

Vhadhushu Zeka, aged 15: The bad thing is that sometimes you have to go to work very early at 3 a.m. and the electricity hurts your eyes. The tobacco [dust] can give you tuberculosis. The good thing is that you will get overtime payment every week, and when you have finished, a cow will be killed for you. You also get bonus payments of $500 and blankets.

Tobacco packer

Ireen, aged 11: Each and every day my mother wakes up early in the morning and goes to make a fire in the kitchen so that she can cook and eat. Then she goes to work. My mother packs tobacco. She works very hard and she is admired by many people. When she comes from work she eats, washes the dishes, and cleans the house. And every day she warms water for washing faces. My mother wants me to be educated, and she wants me to learn to cook different things.



Tobacco planter

Lovemore Ben, aged 15: It is good because you will be given time to eat. It is bad because the money is few and if you don't do it nicely, your money will be taken off.

Tree feller

Casual labour or piecework is often precarious, even when work is available.

Women are usually only employed on a casual basis, and for single women and widows, casual labour is often their only source of income

Beaular Chemukunga, aged 13: The job is nice because you are not [forced to do it] and people don't use immoral language at you. Others make you happy by telling stories. It is bad because you can work in the rain, and you can get sick and you can have asthma when you get a cold. (You start work at 6 a.m. and you finish at 5.30 p.m.).

Majaira Choga, aged 15: The good point is that you ride on a tractor when going to work. The bad points are that your legs and your hands will be cracked because of being cold. You will always be dirty. The whiteman don't count you, he will see you like a hare. He only counts his manager.

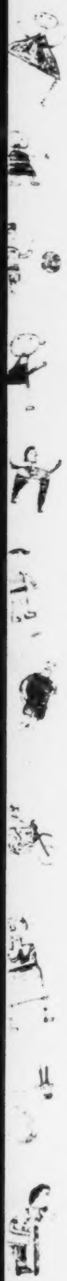
Simon Simon, aged 14: They cut down trees to make a field when they want to cultivate.

Grace Gomani, aged 13: Working in the fields is very difficult and the people are less paid. ... They wake up early in the morning, leaving all the housework undone. ... People work on targets. If you don't finish, the foreman add another piece of work on top of the one not finished.

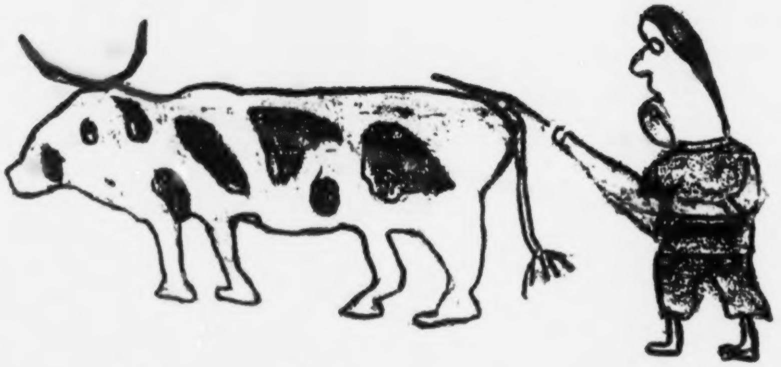
Fortunate Makore, aged 12: There are a lot of people at the farm. Working in the fields is very tough. We wake up early in the morning leaving our children in bed. At times we come back very late only to see our children back into the bed.

Virimai Chambuluka, aged 14: Life on the farm is hard, rough and tough. Work on the farm starts at five in the morning to five in the evening. Farmworkers work on farms without any protective clothes and at the end of the month earn very little money.

Stanley Banda, aged 12: People at the farm do piece jobs ... If you don't finish you won't be paid ... If you want to work at a farm, you must be someone who has a strong character because the managers can be tough at times.



Vengai Bacilea: Working on a farm is very difficult. People work very hard to survive and they are paid very little money. People work on targets. If you don't finish, they don't pay you.



Education: hopes and fears

'Education is my tomorrow's sunshine.'

Panganai Mucheki, aged 13

'Even parents are passionate for us children to learn with hope.'

Makomborero Magwa, aged 14

'If you see us watering, using pipes, don't think that we didn't go to school.'

Stanley Anjero, aged 13

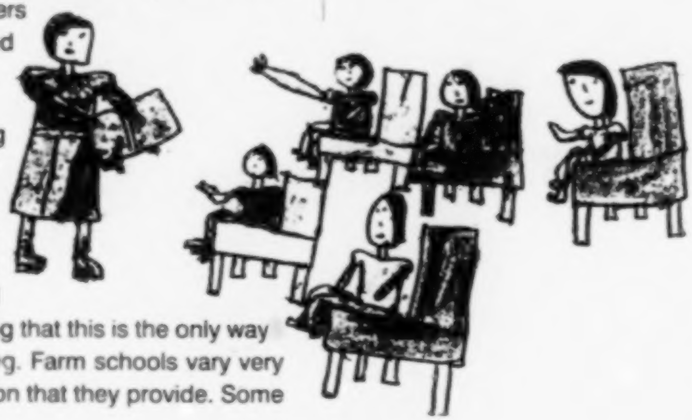
For the children of farmworkers, education is the horizon beyond which they see a future other than the farm. However, they face many obstacles even before they can achieve a grade seven education, and only a comparatively small proportion (perhaps twenty per cent) of children go on to secondary school. Poor families cannot easily afford school fees, even when these are low. (They can be as high as $100 a term, but are more usually between $10 and $30 a term.) On some farms, education is free, but school uniforms, exercise books, pens, etc. are items that the parents are often unable or reluctant to buy. When school fees are not paid, the children cannot attend school, and in consequence many children have their education disrupted. Girls are particularly disadvantaged as when school fees for only one child can be found, these are paid for the education of the male child. Moreover, girls are responsible for household duties (as we have seen in Chapter 2), and if the mother is working, young girls are often required to stay at home to do the housework, fetch water and firewood, and look after younger siblings. These duties either prevent them from going to school, or have to be done as well and their schoolwork suffers as a result. It is not uncommon to find a girl child waking at five a.m., completing a number of household chores, walking several kilometres to school, and then repeating the process at the end of the school day. Although commercial farmers are increasingly working together to build and fund well-equipped schools that will service several farms in one area, on many farms no schools exist. Thus, many children

have to walk a long way to the nearest school, if they are encouraged to attend it. Younger children are often physically unable to walk these distances; or they will reach school tired, hungry and unable to concentrate. Casual and seasonal labourers will move from one farm to another and their children's education is interrupted, sometimes for months or years at a time.

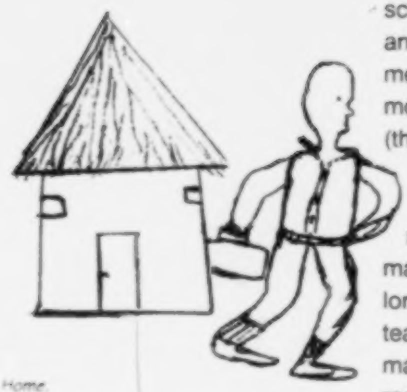
For the above reasons, children attending farm schools, are often older than the norm. This creates its own problems: if they are old enough to be employed, income-generation will often take precedence over schooling, particularly as general workers receive the same wage, whether or not they have any education. Adolescent girls are vulnerable because marriage is seen as an alternative to school. It may be that their education has already been disrupted and they have fallen behind at school, so marriage appears a positive way of escaping from the drudgery of work at home.

Thus, adolescent marriages are common in the farm communities (see Chapter 2) and there is social pressure to conform. Girls who have been initiated, are also seen as marriageable at a very young age (see Chapter 9). Lastly girls are often persuaded, not infrequently against their will, into relationships with men (including teachers) and when they become pregnant, have to marry and leave school. In addition to these constraints, many children do not possess birth certificates. Consequently, they cannot sit their grade seven examinations. For some children this is a significant disincentive and they drop out of school. For those who have certificates, there are no secondary schools in the commercial farming areas, thus children have either to live with relatives or friends in neighbouring towns, or walk long distances.

Farmworkers can rarely afford secondary school fees and there is no provision for financial assistance from government; though some farmers pay the fees for those children who have achieved good grade seven results.



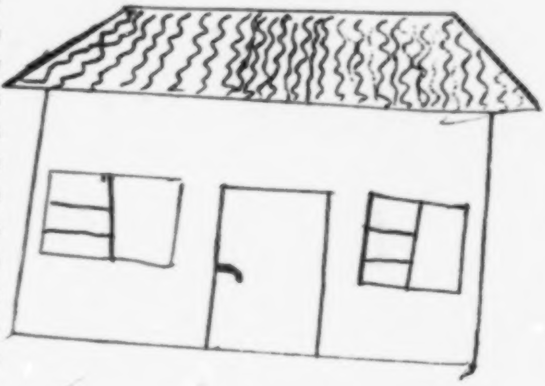
Despite all the above, many children will do everything they can to achieve an education and, when the family cannot afford the school fees, they will work in the holidays to earn them. The laws governing child labour are strict, and children are not allowed to work full-time until they are eighteen. Many children want to do casual work, for example during the harvesting season, knowing that this is the only way they can find the money to continue with their schooling. Farm schools vary very much in terms of facilities and the quality of the education that they provide. Some


Home.

schools are registered. This means that the government pays the teachers' salaries and gives the school a per capita grant for books and other equipment. It also means that school fees are charged and regulations regarding school uniforms, more strictly enforced. Other schools remain unregistered. However, if the farmer (the responsible authority) is interested in the school, the children need not be disadvantaged, save that arrangements have to be made for them to sit their grade seven exams at a registered school. The reasons for not registering a school are various, but not least that the farmer has a loyalty to his teachers, who may not have the relevant qualifications, but may have worked at the school for a long time. Registered schools must employ qualified teachers, and unqualified teachers, no matter how experienced, are required to leave. This issue causes many unregistered teachers much distress. They feel that their commitment is not recognized by the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture and no provision is made for them to further their education. One headmaster, at an unregistered school, said, 'we are laughed at and mocked'. The authorities say, 'we are spoiling children' and should 'just be thrown away as rotten cabbages'. This headmaster has been teaching at his school for thirteen years and achieved an 80 per cent pass rate in the 1998 grade seven examinations.

Teachers at some unregistered schools are very poorly paid. Salaries can be as low as $800 a month, i.e. the same as a field worker. The problems and challenges they face differ from those of urban or rural teachers, and their understanding of, and insights into, the problems faced by children on farms, deserves some recognition.

In addition, the teaching staff, at both registered and unregistered schools, in the commercial farming areas, often feel isolated and in need of more support in terms of in-service training and consultation. Some schools are very well provided for, others have almost no equipment, few books, damp, dark classrooms and hot-seating. Some farms provide basic accommodation for teachers. Teachers who live on the farms may enjoy access to cheaper food, but they also experience the same privations as farmworkers: no electricity, no public transport, distance from clinics, banks, shops, etc.


School.

Teachers at registered schools, who have to travel a long way to work, will apply for transfers, resulting in further disruption to the children's education.

Teachers at both registered and unregistered schools sometimes beat the children, a practise not uncommon throughout the school system. Beating according to Statutory Instrument 368 is not permitted except for very specific offences in a controlled situation, and every beating is supposed to be recorded. The law is, however, not generally, enforceable or understood by most teachers who feel that their discretion to use this form of punishment is undermined. It is also proven that the existence of the law means that 'beating' is hidden and not acknowledged, which makes it even more difficult to monitor and control.

The best schools are those which have the welfare of the children at heart, trained teachers, good equipment, adequate text and library books, exercise books, pens and pencils, and a code of conduct which does not allow teachers to beat or harass (girl) children. Standards such as these, do not only apply to farm schools. Similarly, the question of educational relevance needs to be addressed, in order that children living on farms can acquire skills which will help them in their future lives and enable them to participate in discussions about the welfare of the farm community.

Winnet Chimurara, aged 14: ... School is important because if you want to be a doctor or look for a job, education is needed. And you can't go overseas if you can't read where the plane will be going. For people like President Mugabe and Border Gezi to be where they are is all about education. That's why people say, education is the wealth that I can leave for you ... so we children can be teachers, doctors, presidents and ministers.

Mark Ranjisi, aged 12: I'm a boy aged twelve. I go to school. I am now in grade six. I go to school because schooling is my future. I work hard at school to have a better future.

Katembeni Kazhembe, aged 16: I like school because it help you to be intelligent. If you don't go to school you will see others driving nice cars and you will wish [to] have been at school. ... I have to be educated. Then I will work ... and get money and then I will go to college. I want to be a farm clerk and learn how to drive.

Zandai Churu, aged 15: My father is a tractor driver. He earns little wages and we want many things. What we really want is to go ahead with school. But the money is little. We also have to struggle for food.

Education: a right or a dream?

Children on farms want to go to school. They know that education is the key to a better future. However, many factors beyond their control may prevent them from going to school.

School fees and uniforms

If their parents cannot afford the school fees, children drop out of school. And many others struggle to find money for pens and exercise books. If teachers were strict about uniform, including shoes, fewer children would attend school.

Yet the children are proud. They want to be able to wear a uniform, and are ashamed when they cannot do so. Sometimes they have no soap to wash their clothes, and so absent themselves from school.

Anna Malunga, aged 11: I want to be educated so that if my husband write me a letter, I will be able to read it.

Edith Musomva, aged 12: I like going to school because you will learn many things that you don't know.

Rosemary Mutize, aged 16: If I succeed with my education I want to show the importance of education to children and parents who live on farms. And also the respect you get from people.

Okay Rangarirai, aged 16: We are three going to school [in our family]. Going to school in our family is most admired. ... If things work out I want to do business studies, and I want to be a bank teller.

Nhamo, aged 11: ... I like going to school, but money is the problem. ... I went to school at Matemba. I reached grade two. [Now] I have a problem with reading but I can write.

Edson Kapfudza, aged 13: So we are poor. My family works very hard to earn money for my school uniform.

Tyson Gin, aged 16: During school holidays, I go to work every morning. We go to do different jobs ... cultivating, picking cotton, chasing birds – so they won't eat wheat and Soya beans – helping mother in the field. After work I will do household chores. In the evening I read or write. The money I earn is to buy exercise books and textbooks ... and I can use the money to pay school fees.

Netsai, aged 11: I keep the money [earned from her own crops]. I buy shoes. I also buy socks and if the money is enough for me to buy a uniform, I can also buy one.

Tafadzwa Nyakunda, aged 11: Working at the farm these days is very difficult because people are less paid. You will find that a wife and husband are being paid $700 altogether. School fees and uniform is over $700.

Nhamo Chidzomba, aged 12: If I tell my father that I want money for P.E., he will tell me that he doesn't have money – but he can have money for drinking. If I tell him that I want a pen, he will say, 'I spend all my money paying credits'. These are [some] of my problems in life.

Justin Pocket, aged 13: If I tell my father that I want a school uniform, he will tell my mother. My mother will then say, 'We won't buy you uniforms because you are almost finishing your primary education'.

Calvin Kamesa, aged 18: At our school, we don't have enough textbooks, exercise books and pens. This is because our parents don't have money, not even for clothes. I don't have clothes which make me look as other children do, or even like a schoolchild. Because my parents have many things to worry about, paying school fees and buying food, we don't have all these things.

Saul Steven, aged 16: Schoolchildren in town wear school uniforms ... and we sometimes go to school without uniforms. ... We sometimes go to school wearing dirty clothes. People earn very little at the farm.

Collin Munetsi, aged 16: Children who stay on the farms don't want to go to school. They want to go to work because their parents don't buy them clothes. ... We don't go to school wearing school uniforms. Our parents don't buy [them] for us. Children who stay in town wear a complete uniform e.g. school shoes, stockings, uniform and school hat. The schools are very near. Some of the children travel by buses. The children go to secondary schools after their examinations. They end up doing good jobs. It really sounds very strange to me if I hear someone from town laughing at someone who stays at a farm.

Sarah Petros, aged 15: Not having school uniform and shoes makes me unhappy. When I see other children smart … This is what hurts me.

Norest Chidzoga, aged 13: I think my grandparents might decide for me not to go to secondary school because they might want me to do the household chores.

Vengai Karandura, aged 11: There are some children who do not go to school. They look after young children while others are learning. It is bad because if they go to school they will get education that can help them in the future.

Gender and education

Parents or relatives often want children, particularly the girls, to help in the home or with younger children. They see this as being more useful than having the child attend school.

School homework is difficult because homes are overcrowded and are without electricity. Some parents do not respect schoolwork. Even though the children are tired, they are expected to carry out other duties.

An interrupted education

Farmworkers and casual labourers move quite often from one farm to another, and their children's education is interrupted. On occasion, they are sent to stay with relatives who do not always treat them well.

Norest Chizodga, aged 13: My sister is ten years old. She is not going to school because she is looking after a baby. She is looking after my grandmother's children. She was going to school before because she was staying with another grandmother and she died and my sister stopped going to school.

Karuzhina, Banda, aged 17: I have stayed at home for five years not going to school. I was looking after the baby because I didn't have money to pay school fees and also the schools were far away. Parents were saying wait, boys go first, then you girls. But when the boys had finished school, then I also stayed [at home] for a long time.

Tirever Matanhure, aged 13: [My mother] is a gardener. ... She likes knitting all the time. Me, I prefer reading. But I cannot read because of enough jobs we are given by mother. Most of the times my mother dislike me. She dislikes me at reading. When I start reading my mother come and disturb me.

Blessed Chipere, aged 11: My father left work and then I didn't go to school for eight months. This is what has lowered my education. When I started school I was very good ... but then I stopped going because my stepmother was very sick and my father earned little money, and he sent it to the rural areas where the patient was.

Chenjerai Gibbon, aged 14: My father left work in Harare. He was a soldier. I was in grade one. I stopped going to school for a year. Then he got a job at the farm and I started going to school, and my grandmother was paying my fees. Then my father said, 'Let's go to the rural areas,' and I stopped going to school again because I saw the school was far away. Then [I went to stay] with my stepmother on this farm and she was sending me to school.

Tafadzwa Mukombwe, aged 13: I used to stay with my parents. I stayed [on the farm] for five years. We left to cultivate at our rural area. I learnt there for three years at a school called Chizeza Primary. ... the school fees was [illegible]

too much and my parents couldn't afford fees for six children. They said go and stay with your sister ... I started staying at this farm last month. I haven't seen anything wrong but I don't know how the living conditions will be as time goes on.

Alfred Chimupinyi, aged 12: I don't stay with my mother and father. I stay with my uncle and my aunt. The reason I don't stay with my parents is because there are no schools nearby and my parents don't buy me shoes and uniform. These are my problems.

Zorodzai Chiweyo, aged 13: I used to change school because my parent used to change jobs. When I used to stay with my aunt she didn't treat me nicely. She used to treat me like a servant that is why my life was hard for me to stay at one place. Right now I'm staying with my parents because I was sick.

Abdula, aged 16: [If] I eat before coming to school, I will be late. I like going to school but my parents are the ones that disturbed me because of not paying school fees. I even spent years without going to school. So ... now I'm staying with my sister nicely ... and I am going to school with all my heart and I am looking forward to finishing my grade seven.

Fanuel Chisare, aged 16: My father used to stay at a farm in Mvurwi. The schools were very far away. I have stayed there for five years without going to school.

Wonder Chitsungo, aged 16: I have learned at a school called Mashanga ... from grade one to grade two. What happened for me to leave the school was that my father left work ... . He wanted to fight with the foreman. ... Then the whiteman said, 'Robert, work is over because you want to fight my foreman'. That's when I left the school called Mashanga ... and came to a school called Msorodon from grade three to grade five. I have learn there for three years ... [I left because] it ended in grade

Due to the many disruptions to their education, children on farms are often older than usual at primary school. They can be of an age to have children of their own or to work in the fields.

GRADE 7 RESULTS

five. Then I went to a school called Bushugwe and I have learned there for a year. I have done grade six only. The reason for me to leave that school was that I was staying with my grandmother and grandfather and they said I was mischieving. They said I was coming back home at night. They also said, 'don't play with girls because you can get other people's children pregnant' and they said, 'go and stay with your parents'. That's when I come to here and that's where I am still now.

Brenda Nyakubande, aged 10: I am a girl aged ten years. I can go to school, but I don't think that I will go ahead, because I am the one who looks after the children while my parents are at work. I am healthy, but for a short time, because I am forced to get married while I still very young. Money is my problem. I work very hard thinking that things will improve but it does not. I don't want to lead the same life as my mother had.

Winnet Chimurara, aged 14: I say school is very important because if you go and look for a job you need your [school] certificates.

Absence of birth certificates

Sometimes children are unable to sit their grade seven exams because they have no birth certificates. Certification is made more difficult if their parents do not have identification papers. Without documentation, children cannot sit this final primary school exam.

Anna Malunga, aged 11: I want to be educated but I don't have a birth certificate, so I [cannot go] to secondary school.

Mike Josau, aged 16: There are many children without birth certificates because some parents do not have IDs, so they can't get birth certificates; and some parents have not gone to fetch them. The problem is you can go to school but you cannot write the grade seven exams.

Magaso Isaac, aged 15: The only bad thing [my step-mother] does for me is that she doesn't want to get a birth certificate for me. ... This is the only thing I dislike about her.

Shame Nakaro, aged 14: We have left Malawi in 1989. Then we reached Zimbabwe on the 7th April, 1990. Then my father died without getting me a birth certificate.

Taurai Samuel, aged 14: My mother died in 1994 when I was starting school. My father told me that I was not his child. My sister is the one who paid my fees until now. But I don't have anyone to get a birth certificate for me, and I don't have a school uniform and school shoes. So this makes me unhappy. I see others who are smart.

Jane Kanengoni, aged 14: I wish I had a birth certificate, I would have a better job when I finish school. What makes me unhappy is the problem of not having a birth certificate.

Pamela Jairosi, aged 13: I don't have a birth certificate because ... my father started being sick. He started being sick in 1997 until now. Right now he is much better because he can walk on his own. He couldn't eat or walk. He was carried when going to the toilet. I'm looking forward to this month [because] maybe we can go and get my birth certificate. It doesn't worry me as both my parents have IDs. ... But this month I will get a birth certificate because when they get their salaries we will go to the offices. When we go there we don't need a witness who is not clever because some children don't get birth certificates because their witness will not be clever. You need a clever one, not the one who is not clever. If I don't get it my life won't go ahead.

Gerald Gambai, aged 15: The first day when the registration officers came, my mother asked my father if he had his ID and he said, ' I do'. When ... he showed them his passport, my mother said, 'why have you said that you have the ID, when you mean the passport?' The reason for us not to get birth certificates is that my father has two wives and the younger wife doesn't want us to have birth certificates. She is the one who has lost my father's ID. Even father himself doesn't want to get us birth certificates. My stepmother said, 'don't get them birth certificates because they are not people'. My mother wanted to go to the police, so that father can get arrested....

When he is arrested my mother's grandfather will then get us birth certificates. I'm a child who is doing grade seven. This year I'm not going to write exams because I don't have a birth certificate. Because of that my education will go back. Because in grade seven you don't write exams if you don't have a birth certificate.

Paidamoyo Chisamupeni, aged 14: Firstly my mother came to get me a birth certificate and my father refused. My mother tried to get one for me herself but the registration officers refused saying we want the father of the child. Until now I don't have a birth certificate. Then my mother went to the rural areas when she was sick. During the holiday my father called me wanting to go and get my birth certificate, but my mother didn't come. My father said, 'Lets go and try' but they refused saying we want the mother of the child.

We tried going to Chitungwiza but nothing happened. They said, 'we want the

Esnat Zenda: *'I got seven O-levels and now I am working in the packhouse. I earn $171 a week.'*

child's mother and if she is not here there is no way you can get the birth certificate. ... If she is not here you can't get one'. I wrote a letter to my mother looking forward for her to come but she replied saying, 'I'm still very sick, even to stand up on my own I can't'. So I'm waiting for her to get well. Maybe that's when she can come to get me a birth certificate with my father. I don't know when she can get well ...

Kudakwashe Mutasa, aged 14: Some children at the farm don't want to go ahead with their education. They look for a job while they are still very young.

Brightest Matope, aged ?: There are some children who work. They are grade sevens who couldn't go ahead with school, and they stay on the farm. They are paid at the end of the month, according to the days they have worked. They earn as much money as the elders do.

Sandy Saidi, aged 14: We the farm children, we do bad things. Most of us when we finish primary education, we go to work in the tobacco fields and we look after cattle. Girls especially run away from school and work in the fields.

Norest Chidzoga, aged 13: I think my grandparents might decide for me not to go to secondary school because they might want me to do the household chores.

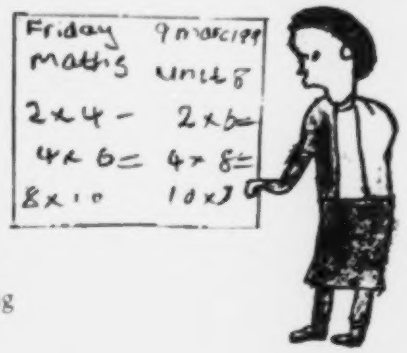
Vengai Karandura, aged 11: There are some children who do not go to school. They look after young children while others are learning. It is bad because if they go to school they will get education that can help them in the future.

Disincentives to education

A further difficulty is that the grade seven school-leavers are paid the same as workers without any formal schooling. Parents, on whom the children depend to pay school fees, are disenchanted because they feel that education on the farms makes very little difference in terms of remuneration. Moreover, income-generation nearly always takes precedence over schooling.

Norest Chidzoga, aged 13: There are too many teachers in our school who beat children. I think that when they are beating them, they should not forget that they are beating children. They beat them with a batter stick. They are beaten when they miss lessons. You know some of the children come from far away and because of being hungry, they end up missing lessons.

Mike Josau, aged 16: A bad teacher is one who beats you if you have done something wrong and children will be always afraid of that teacher and some will end up refusing to go to school.



Cloud John More, aged 15: A good teacher is someone who does not beat children for silly reasons.

Netsai, aged 11: [A good teacher is one who] teaches nicely and teaches pupils to understand and pass and who doesn't beat often. A bad teacher is one who is cruel.

Tawanda Mateazu, aged 14: I went to church and came back late and I slept for a short time. In the morning I woke up, and lit a fire and went to bath. Then the bell rang and I went to school ... I started to write my correction to yesterday's exercise and at that very moment I fell asleep... when the teacher came and saw me sleeping, he hit me. I started to cry and I ran out of the classroom and I went home. ... The blood was gushing from my nose. ... when I reached home, father was still there. He poured some water on my head to try to stop the blood flowing. Then he instructed me to go back to the headmaster with him. They discussed the issue and the teacher came. He was asked by my father to apologize, but he refused and he remained silent. The following morning, I went back to school.

Farm schools, both registered and unregistered, often have an inadequate number of books, desks, classrooms, and are dependent on the farmer for assistance.

Idzai, aged 14: Children who are disciplined will be beaten up at the office by the headmaster. They will be beaten for being late and missing lessons. I was beaten once for being late for assembly.

Nhamo, aged 13: There are too many teachers who beat schoolchildren. I think they should not forget that they are beating children. And you know some of them come from far away and because of being hungry they end up missing lessons.

Veronica, aged 14: Children are beaten up if they are dirty when they are writing. They will be beaten with a stick from the gum tree.

Jeremiah, aged 11: Children are beaten by the teachers when they use vulgar words. If I have children I will first talk to them, but if they make the same mistake again, I will beat them.

Idzai, aged 14: I will talk to my children when they do something wrong.

Corporal punishment

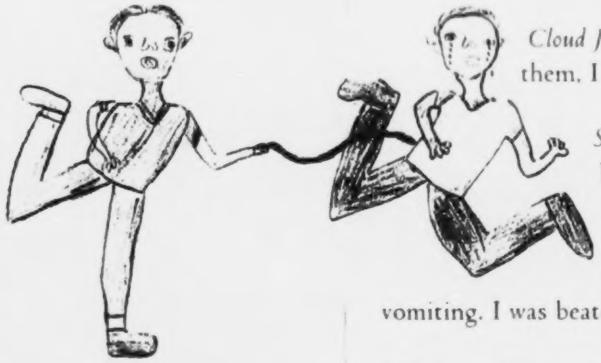
Teachers regularly use corporal punishment to discipline children. Most children see this as the distinguishing factor between what makes a 'good' and what makes a 'bad' teacher.

As beating is the main form of punishment which children experience both at home and at school, children have ambivalent attitudes towards it. Although many felt that it was wrong they also indicated that they would beat their own children.

When parents have invested in educating a child, they can take very harsh measures if the child absents him or herself without leave.

Nhamo, aged 13: The first time I will talk to my children: the second time I will also talk to them; but the third time, if they don't listen, I will beat them up.

Veronica, aged 14: I will beat my children with a stick if they have done something wrong.



Cloud John More, aged 15: If I have children and I want to discipline them, I will beat them.

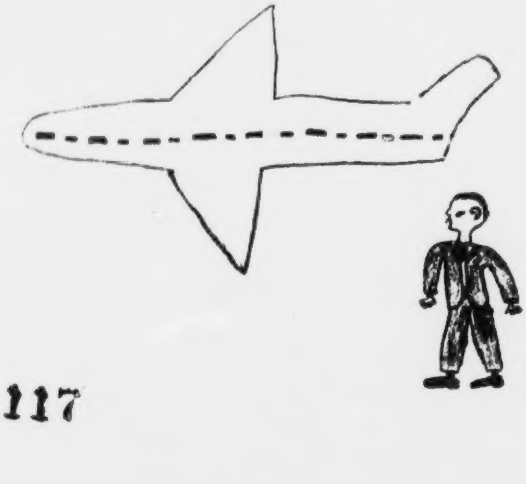
Sekai Nyakusengwa, aged 11: It was Saturday afternoon. I was beaten by my mother because I didn't go to school on Friday. I was beaten over the whole body with a batter stick. I was beaten ten times and she left me. She closed the door and beat me inside the house. When I was beaten I started vomiting. I was beaten with a rubber batter stick. ...

Mike Josau, aged 16: Most children of farmworkers do not go to school because of not having schools near the farms and not having secondary schools.

Because scholarships are not available, more help is needed from the social welfare or from the social dimensions fund.

Collin Munetsi, aged 16: Most of us, the children of the farmworkers, we don't go to secondary school.

Owen Kapare, aged 13: When I grow up I would like to be a pilot. I don't think I will achieve this ambition because my parents don't have money to send me to secondary school. ... Life these days is difficult. It needs someone to be educated. ... if I become a pilot, I think I will be the happiest person in the world.



School Rules

The school rules reflected here, by one grade seven class, reveal current rules in schools and what the children feel about the way they are enacted; the way in which threats and punishment are part of their lives; and the authoritarian nature of the school system.

Our school rules would say that you are not supposed to:

— steal school property.

— gossip.

— play *chabuta* or cards at school.

— use immoral language at school.

— disagree with the teacher.

— make a noise at school.

— walk when the flag is being raised.

— run away from school or from lessons, because you can miss many things. The punishment will be planting flowers.

— run back home when you have been beaten by the teacher.

— be absent for no reason and to go home without being told to go by the teacher.

— refuse to be sent on an errand.

— play with boys at school, if you are a girl.

— fight because you can hurt others, maybe on the eye. The punishment will be digging a hole and planting a tree. (When digging the hole you can fall in and even die).

You are supposed to:

— respect the teachers and do as you are told.

— respect elders.

The headmaster should tell the teachers that:

— when a child has stolen something, the punishment will be digging a rubbish pit.

— when schoolchildren have had a fight, the punishment will be watering the flowers or the vegetable garden.

— each and every child must greet visitors, parents, teachers and other people.

— every Monday we have assembly and we are not allowed to make a noise.

— when a schoolchild has done something wrong, he or she has to be beaten or given punishment.

The disadvantages of school rules is that you are not supposed to be given punishment when your body isn't strong enough, or when you are still sick. If I were a teacher and if a child comes to school late, I wouldn't beat her or him because it wouldn't be the child's fault. Maybe something would have happened at home. A schoolchild is not supposed to be beaten when her or him has done something wrong but to be given a punishment. Schoolchildren are not supposed to work for long time and if they don't follow what they are told to do, you have to give them. They are not supposed to steal. And a schoolchild is not supposed to stay away from school because of prostituting.

Is there a future after grade seven?

There is rarely a future for those children who manage to sit their grade seven examination. There are no secondary schools in the commercial farming areas.

Leonard Corffat, aged 15: I don't go to school. My parents couldn't afford the school fees. [I ended in] grade seven. I had eighteen units. ... I want to do a better job. I want to be a doctor. Now I am just staying at home doing the household chores.

Manyara Undi, aged 12: My father has a big problem because he is paid small money ... when my brother did form one, my father went to social welfare to be paid money ... but this term the social welfare said ... they want to help people with no parents and people who is disabled. My father started worrying about the money he is going to pay for my brother for his form four.

Parents are rarely able to afford secondary school education.

Vengai Karandura, aged 11: When I have finished grade seven I am going to secondary school in Mvurwi. But maybe I will not go because my father has very little wages and the money will not be enough. He will be buying mealie-meal and clothing.

Tendai Harandure, aged 15: I am worried why children do not go to secondary schools. My father works in the fields and our family is huge. My father earns little money. He also has to pay school fees.

Tongogara Vinge, aged 16: I sometimes ask my brothers and sisters, 'Do you enjoy just sitting?' when you hear them saying, 'Why should we go to school?' Father have said 'If you want to go to school you have to pay the fees yourself'.

Joshua Msipa who hitch-hikes 29 km to secondary school every day. 'I get up very early and sometimes I see a fox. I fear no evil because God is with me.'

Maxwell Mwale, aged 13: Father said I am not going to secondary school, because there is my young sister who do well last year in grade one. So father compare me to a grade one child.

Mary Lewis, aged 15: The problem which I have is the money problem because my parents are poor and they cannot afford to pay for my secondary education. This is one of the problems that may stop me from becoming a nurse.

Mike Josau, aged 16: I leave for [secondary] school at 4 a.m. and reach school at 7 a.m. and start lessons at 7.15 a.m. My parents give me five dollars every day to buy food.

Egnes Zhanota, aged 13: [My parents] didn't have money for school fees because my father was ill and he wasn't working, and he wanted to pay school fees for my brother who was at secondary school.

Maxwell Mwale, aged 13: I got one brother who is educated as a clerk. My sisters follow the brother – three of them. [They] are married because my father didn't send them to school. I don't know why they didn't send girls to secondary schools.

Batsirai Aaron, aged 14: There was a girl called Netsai who got pregnant when she was doing grade five ... the girl has been chased away by her parents and sent to her boyfriend's home. The reasons for her getting pregnant were that she was persuaded by her friend to go with this boy. [Now] the way she is living is not straightforward. Netsai is beaten by her husband most days. Also the boy's mother doesn't like her. The food is not enough and she is struggling for everything in her home. Her child is not healthy.

Gerald Kudzara, aged 17: A girl I know was in form two and she got pregnant. The man was unknown. She gave birth to her child and she was told to go to her husband. The man took her but their life was hard because her husband was looked after by his parents and he was going to school ... her parents have told her to leave school and go to work so that she can look after the baby ... then the boy stopped going to school and started working on the farm. Their life was hard. They always fight and they don't have enough food. The man learned to drink beer and smoke. He spent all his money drinking beer and there was no food at home. The wife didn't go to work because her husband didn't allow her.

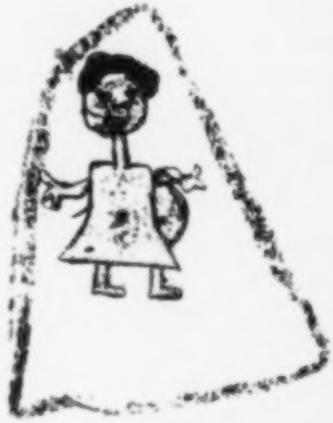
Chiedza Gudo, aged 14: A young girl in our village always came home from school when it was dark. Her mother always asked her why she was late. She always said that she had stayed behind to do weeding. Her mother always said in her heart, '*rine manyanga hariputirwe*' [a heifer can't hide its horns for ever]. ... the girl met some clever boys, they grabbed her and took her to a nearby forest and forced her to do things she didn't want to do ... and she became pregnant ... and her mother is saying, 'I wish I hadn't wasted my money paying school fees'.

Mangatai Micah, aged 14: Children in the farm get married very early because of poverty.

Stella Mapurira, aged 15: Children are told not to go to school, so that they can work in the fields for the family.

If secondary fees for one child are found, it is usually the boy who is sent, and the girl who has to remain at home. Not least because children have either to travel long distances or live away from home.

Girls often become pregnant and cannot go on to secondary education. Sometimes this is because they are pressured by men and boys into sexual relationships.



'This girl is pregnant.'

There is a need for family life education in schools. This is often not taught. Choices made in the context of the moment, have untold and damaging consequences on the lives of children, and their children.

Child labour

The only way in which children can help themselves is to work on the farms and earn money.

Legally[1] children are not allowed to do light work until they are over the age of twelve. Over the age of sixteen the work they do is supposed to include some form of vocational training. However, children know that casual work is often the only way in which they will be able to pay school fees.

Mike Josau, aged 16: I don't work in the whiteman's fields. He only wants people who are eighteen years and above. I think it is good because if some children earn money they will refuse to go to school.

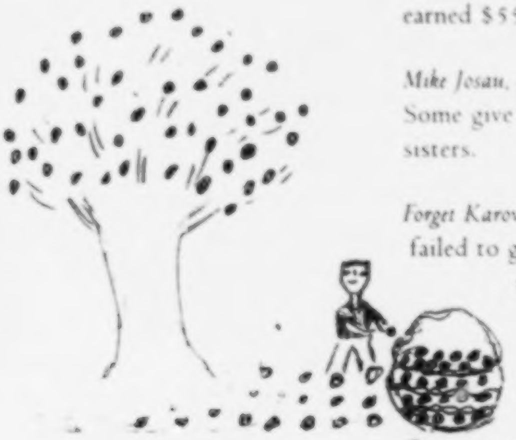
Cloud John Mere, aged 15: During the holidays, children work. We will be weeding the fields. If I get money I can buy clothes. I also help father to do the garden, and I pass the grass when we are thatching. But I would refuse to work in the fields and not go to school. In the holidays I can earn about $400. My parents keep the money.

Katembeni Kazhembe, aged 16: I think my parents may not afford the school fees to send me to secondary school. If I work to earn money myself, I won't be able to concentrate on my school work. I will be tired. But working [on the farm] during the holidays is good because children will be just seated and not doing anything.

Tawadzwa Nyakunda, aged 11: Sometimes I go to pick cotton. It is not a hard job. I earned $55 and I used it to buy pens.

Mike Josau, aged 16: Children who work use their money to buy clothes and food. Some give their money to their parents to pay school fees for their brothers and sisters.

Forget Karowa, aged 13: My elder brother is now working on this farm because he failed to get school fees for his form one. If possible I am going to work during the holidays in order for me to have cash for the fees.



Picking apples

January Dzikoma, aged 12: There is a time when the whiteman asks school-going children, 'Who wants to work during the weekend and get paid?' So that's where I sometimes go and do easy work. Oranges are grown, so we will be harvesting oranges. I give my money to my mother and she keeps it for me. She will give it to me when I want it to buy school things.

Caroline Mukumbareza, aged 13: On the farms, we can work during school holidays. In towns, jobs are not easily found.

McDonald Company, aged 15: During school holidays, we go to work so that we can help our parents by buying clothes. We start work at 7 a.m. and we finish at 3 p.m. We want to work[1] during the holidays so that we can buy what we need when

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[1] The Labour Relations (Employment of Children and Young Persons) Regulations, 1997. Statutory Instrument 72 dated 14th March, 1997.

school opens. And if we tell mother that we want school shoes, she will realize that we helped her ... we want to work hard to be good children who help their parents.

Shepherd Edias, aged 12: I go to work in the school holidays. I go at 8 a.m. and I come back at 12. We will be working for $25 each and every day. When it will be pay day ... it will be a lot of money. You can afford to buy clothes. We will be chasing birds from the wheatfields. When the wheat is dry and harvested, we won't have other jobs to do, and we just stay at home in the compound.

Tafadzwa Gaba, aged 15: I go to work during the school holidays. Sometimes I chase birds from the wheatfields. I like this job because that's when I can buy shoes and a school bag. We go to work at 6 a.m. and finish at 6.30 p.m. These are the only problems ... but I have a problem why others don't want to work.

Caroline Nyanga, aged 13: Cotton picking is good because your money depends [on how much you pick] ... and if you want to go on working, you can earn a lot of money ... Some of the time it is not good because you will be scratched ... sometimes work is not good because you will be weeding, you will be working as if you can die, and you will still be left with fifteen lines to do.

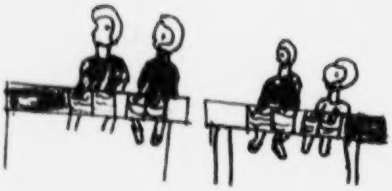
Shelton Chiyera, aged 12: There are some children on the farm who do not go to school. They hang around in the roads watching the bikes passing by. They will find life hard. They won't be able to find jobs.

Jackson Cheidi, aged 14: Children chase the cattle from the tobacco field. They do not go to school and spend their time doing this.

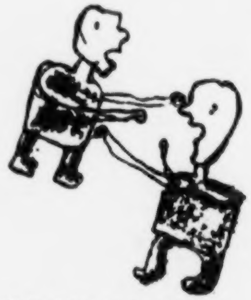
Clever Maxan, aged 13: We have to show charity to our children by sending them to school, so that they can help us in the future when we get into problems. Children have to be sent to school. School uniforms must be bought for them and all school items.

Sainabu Ismael, aged 13: My father works as a storekeeper at a farm ... . In our family we are four children. Our first born finished his O-level this year. Me, I am in grade six. Our third born is in grade five and next year he will go in grade six. And our last born is promised to go to school next year.

Dodirai Dean: My father likes children to go to school every day. Although he was not going to school, he likes children to go to school. ... When it is the weekend, my



Children, particularly boys, who do not go to school often have little or nothing to do.



'These boys are fighting.'

When, however, parents can afford to send their children to school, they will encourage and support them. And they want their children to work hard and do well.

parents like children to be reading books and work out maths. If you are not reading, my mother start shouting. She [says], 'I don't want children playing, but reading'.

Tongogara Vinge, aged 16: I want to thank the farm owner. He built a school for us. But there are still some children who do not go to school and this is not their parents' problem.

Farmers who support the schools are always appreciated

Shaudhai Godfrey, aged 14: What I really like about staying on the farm is that when you have passed your grade seven exams, the ***murungu*** will send you to secondary school. He will pay the school fees and buy your books until you finish form four. And farm schools are very cheap, we only pay $31 a term.

Thom Bernard, aged 13: Farm schools are cheaper than city school.

Shanai Amon, aged 14: The farm owner is very kind, we pay little money for school fees. Books, exercise books and textbooks are bought for free.

Role models

It is said that the poorer children often have no role models outside the farm and that this is a disincentive to attending school. When, however, there is a role model, children are quick to consider an alternative future for themselves.

Nhamo, aged 11: I want to be a car-driver ... I used to know a driver. His name was Danger ... I liked him.

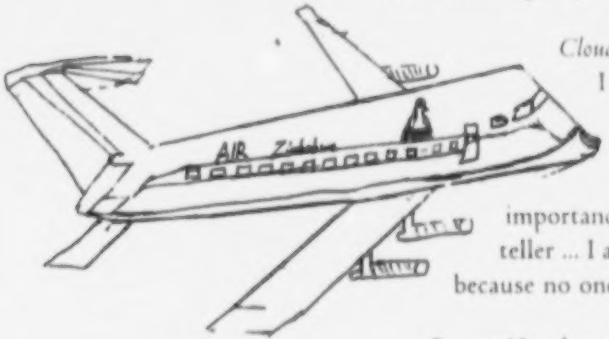
Ngonidzashe Zonda: My father is a driver on the farm. He drives one of the farm lorries. ... I am going to drive a big truck that is going out to Zambia and South Africa, so I need a driving licence to achieve this. So to be educated it is very good.

Alima Amisi, aged 15: When I grow up I want to be a teacher. I want to teach children.

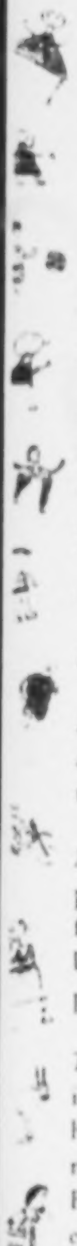
Cloud John More, aged 15: I want to be a doctor. At secondary school, I will learn to drive and be a doctor.

Okay Rangarirai, aged 16: I want to be a bank teller because there was a teacher at primary school [who] taught us the importance of being a bank teller. He also left his job to become a bank teller ... I also had the idea of becoming a lawyer, but I changed my mind because no one could pay for me.

Patuma Maseche, aged 15: When I grow up I want to be a policewoman. I like being a policewoman because there are many people who get into trouble and are helped by a policeman or policewoman. Being a policewoman helps the success of our country Zimbabwe. It also helps to prevent selfishness and murder. I want to go ahead with schooling so that I can have a better future.



'When I grow up I want to be a pilot. I want to stay in Kuwadzana Area 5 in Harare. I will be staying in a five-roomed house and it will be fenced right round with electric wire.' (Tavengwa Marizani, aged 14)



Christopher Nyaruvinga aged 14: I want to be a train driver ... and I want to get married and have children. I will send them to school with all my heart ... and I will want them to finish school ... and I will look for different jobs for them. When they have worked, I want each and every one of them to buy a house. If a child refuses to go to school, I will throw him or her from my home because I will want them to look after me.

Prisca Dauton, aged 14: I would like to be a nurse when I grow up. I will go for a nursing course that will last for five years. … I will be staying in a big beautiful house and … wearing a white uniform. I will not be cruel to patients. … I would like to be a nurse because God said that we should help those in need.

Mathias Magaba, aged 15: It was last year on the 3rd December. We were looking forward to being given our results … and that evening we were having a party and everyone was happy. Things were bought by the whiteman. All the children came together and were given things. ... The children thanked the *murungu*, and he said, 'Don't mention it' ... then we enjoyed the party until morning, then I went home to take a bath ...

Rwisai Maposa, aged 14: I like school, so that I can have a better future.

Norest Chidzoga, aged 13: What I like about going to school is that when you receive a letter you will read it yourself. I also like seeing others who have succeeded through being educated and they are doing good jobs.

Mildred Malili, aged 13: Until now my family are suffering from not having enough parents to look after us. ... But I want to be very educated because I want my family [of nine] to return to where they were. ... When I finish school, I want to be a teacher because my sisters are not educated, so I want to help them. I prefer to do my form one to form four at Gateway School.

Trevor Ngwenya, aged 11: Everybody in the world needs education. Education is important in our lives. For me to be a doctor or an engineer I need to have education. Education does not end. It ends when one dies. If there was no education all of us would be suffering from serious poverty. When the British came, Africans never knew that there was this thing called education. Now almost everyone can read and write. Nowadays many people have certificates, diplomas and degrees in different subjects. They

At the end of term, some farmers provide a party, or gifts for a prize-giving. These events give children great pleasure.

Education and the future

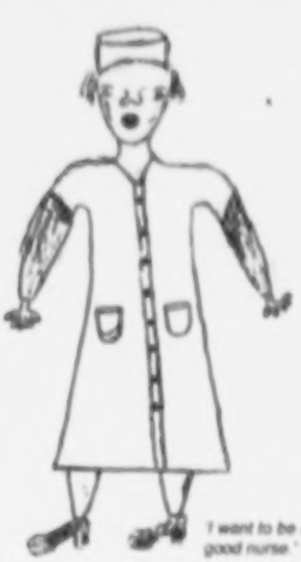
Children have enormously high hopes for the changes that education will bring to their lives.

worked hard at school, college and universities. But as for me I am still learning. So ladies and gentlemen without education we are nowhere.

Wisborn Abinarah, aged 14: Without education our lives will be full of troubles. If you are educated you can control yourself. We should educate hard so that we can have decent homes and lives. Education is the most important thing in our lives, because we get better jobs after education. If you are educated you can speak with anyone who comes from South Africa using the English language. Without education one's life will be a total blackout. Movement from one place to another would be a problem since reading of signs and names of places would be totally difficult. Boarding buses would be difficult to uneducated people since reading destination labels would be a problem. Calculating change would be a big problem. An educated nation is always a developed nation.

One who is educated, if looking for employment, has an option of choosing what he wants to do and can be able to complete an application form. Whereas an uneducated one has no option to choose because he/she doesn't have educational papers to support him/her. If an uneducated person is given an application form he/she cannot complete it. This shows why education is important in our lives.

Children are eager to make a contribution to society as adults.


'I want to be a good nurse.'

Sainabu Ismael, aged 13: Next year I will be in grade seven. When I finish my secondary I want to go to university and when I finish I want to be a nurse.

Tarisai Mburu, aged 13: I would like to be a doctor. I will like to help people who are suffering from various diseases because many people in Zimbabwe are dying from small diseases. I am not happy about it, so I want to try to help those people who are suffering. I will like to live in a good house with my parents. I will never like to live in a hovel because I don't want to suffer from things like typhoid and TB. I will never drink liquor or smoke. I would like to be an educated woman who knows what to do.

Rufaro Dodzo, aged 11: When I complete my form four, I want to do a course in nursing and I want to be a good nurse. I would like to help those that are sick ... and when I have worked for about one year, I would like to go outside the country, and I would like to look after my parents and my little sisters, and I would like to buy them some clothes and other things they want.

Shepherd Kingstone, aged 16: I want to be a pilot. That is the job I want to do if God will be with me. I don't know if I can be able to do this because I don't have a father

and a birth certificate for me to be helped in life. So I don't know what to do. ... I think if someone can help me, I think I can succeed, because I am willing to do so.

Stanley Anjere, aged 13: When I grow up I want to be a shopkeeper. I like this job because you won't be heated by the sun. ... It's good to be educated because when you grow up you can look after your parents ... and look for a job of selling in a shop. Then you can buy your house in the city ... education is good and children have to cry to go to school.

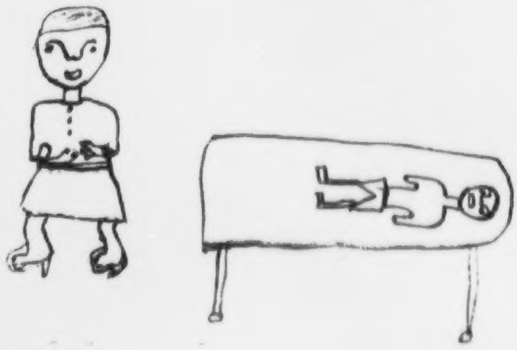
Fanuel Chagumaira, aged 13: When I grow up and if God is with me I want to be a bus driver ... you will be given your salary every week. They will give you money before you die and they will also give you a coffin. I want to do this job so that I can look after my mother who is working for me right now to go to school.

Anyway Chisare, aged 12: I want to be a teacher ... I don't want to stay on the farms. I want to stay in the city in a five-roomed house. I want children who are smart and hygienic ... who listen and who have good manners.

Evelyn Chokufara, aged 13: When I grow up I want to be a teacher ... because you will get a lot of money ... and if I want to buy a car, I can. I'd like to teach in towns because it is nice there ... I will buy an attractive house. The job is not hard and you can eat different things ... because you will earn good money.

Fungai Chigwedere, aged 15: Our school was built in 1995. There are eight teachers and seven groups. That's the garden where vegetables are grown. For the vegetable leaves to be green, they put cow dung on the gardens. They take the dung from the cattle kraal. And this is the soccer ground, and behind it there is an orchard near the teacher's houses. This is the pre-school where the children goes to play. The whiteman gives them milk to drink and porridge which would be cooked with beans mixed wth milk. This was done [the pre-school was started] so that children would not disturb their mothers when they are working.

Faith Sande, aged 13: In our school garden we grow many vegetables [and in] the orchard there are many fruits such as mangoes, guavas, mulberries and avocado pears. Then I will show people the school toilets. Next we will go

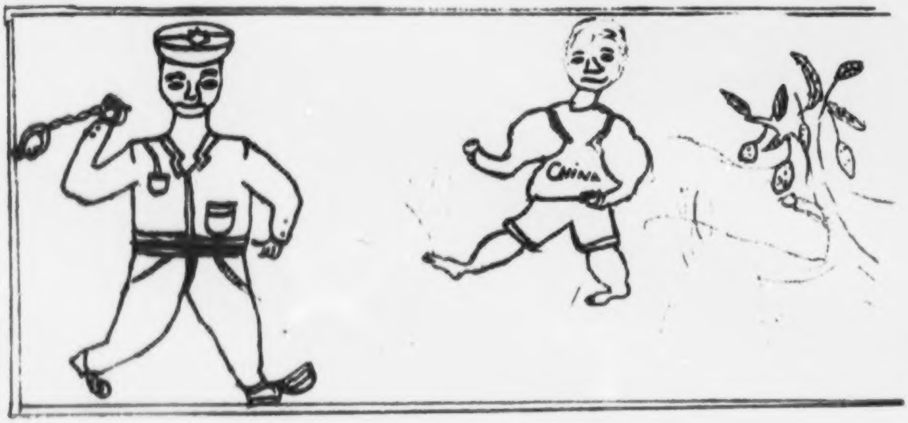


'When I grow up I want to be a doctor. I don't want to be a prostitute. On farms children get married too early.'

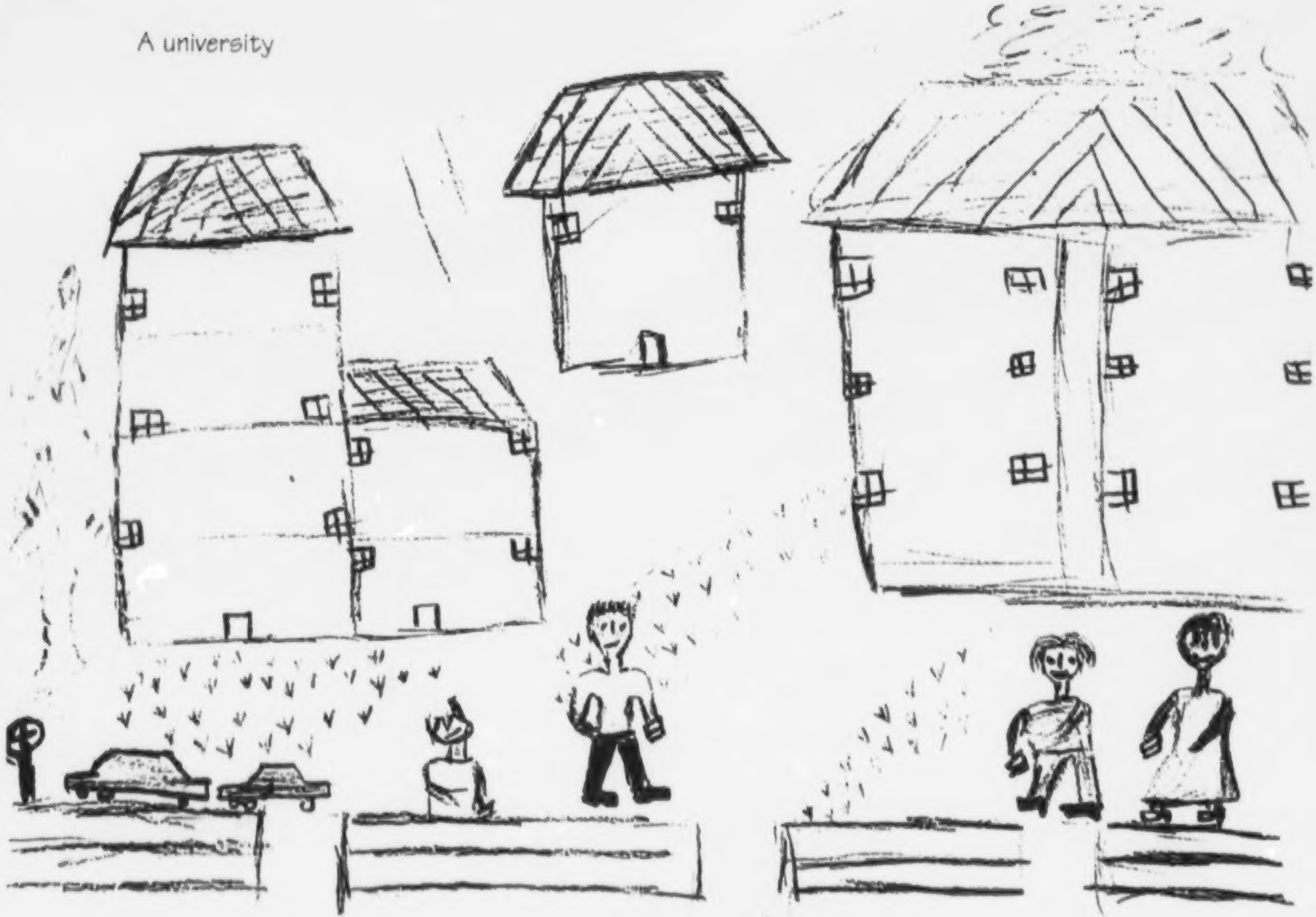
When schools are well provided for by the responsible authority (the farmer or the government or both) children recognize the advantages.

to the office where books are stored and then to the soccer ground. There is one for boys and one for girls. The first house [next to the school] is the headmaster's house. There are seven teachers [and they all live at the school].

Michael Mujaji, aged 16: Our school is nice. We don't pay fees. School and excercise books are bought for us. That's what our school is like.



'I want to be a policeman if I succeed with my education. ... And I want to visit different places such as Victoria Falls, Hwange National Park and Harare Gardens.'



A university

Sometimes we have fun

It is not the prize that makes me not to forget that day but I was the hero.

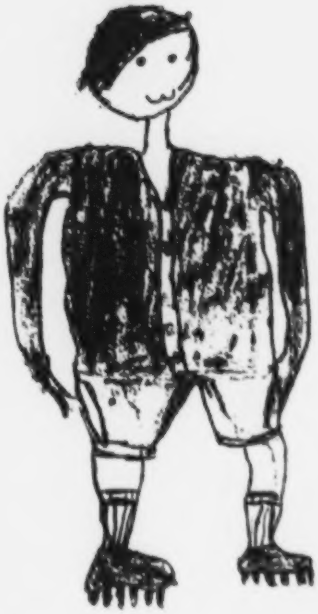
Tinashe Masunda, aged 13

This game gladdens us a lot. We will be singing,

Shainai Amon, aged 14

Farm labourers work long hours. The work is physically demanding and they return home to eat and sleep. Very little recreation is experienced by a family, as a family, with the possible exception of weddings, funerals and religious services – if these are considered recreational.

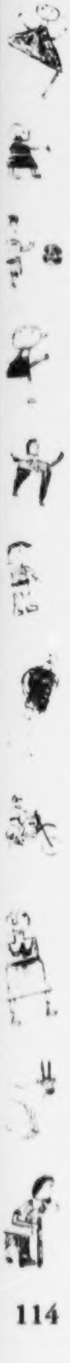
Similarly, children, particularly girls, work very hard. Houses have to be cleaned and swept, dishes and clothes washed, water and firewood collected, and younger siblings have to be cared for. All of which leaves little time for recreation, particularly during the school term.



Most farms now have a pre-school where children under the age of six can take part in guided play activities. The best pre-schools have swings, see-saws, climbing frames and roundabouts. Good schools will also have chalkboards, pencils, crayons, paper and even books. Good pre-school teachers will decorate the classrooms and will teach the children songs, dances and games. Neglected pre-schools will have none of the above and the children will be herded into a makeshift space (sometimes the beerhall) to learn to be quiet and not to make a nuisance of themselves.

If the beerhall is the only recreational space for adults, the football pitch is often the only space provided for older boys to play – the space providing the activity. Weekend inter-school or inter-farm matches are a highlight of the week.

Finally, children have nothing to play with in the formal sense of toys or equipment. Nonetheless the children often possess an irrepressible sense of fun and of ingenuity. They make their own



games with intricate sets of rules and manage with little more than sticks and stones. Through these games children learn the social skills of winning and losing, of playing fair and of abiding by the rules of the game. Essentially, games provide a space in which children can be themselves, freed – albeit briefly – from family duties and family pressures.

Rosemary Mutize, aged 16: My happiest day was on a Sunday in 1997. My friend and I went to her sister's wedding party. ... The wedding then starts at 9 a.m. It was done in Tendai Hall which is in Bindura. My friend's sister is called Freeda. At first we saw the companions coming into the hall dancing to rumba music of Kanda Bongo Man – a song called 'Yolanda'. People start clapping and cheering to the dance.

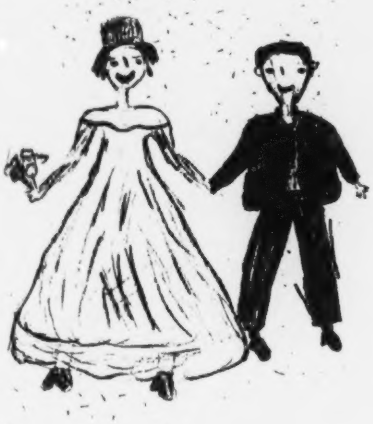
Then the bride comes in the hall dancing to the same song with her best boy. After that the bridegroom then entered the hall dancing to the song of Pamela Mkuta called 'Sweet Mama'. Then after that the pastor enters the hall and stands in front of all people saying words according to the wedding. The bride's parents said their word. Then they put music on while they were wearing rings. People were then given time to go and eat and then the ceremony continues.

Then the bride and the bridegroom cut their cake and ate it. And both their parents were given their cakes. People were then given pieces of cake. Then people started giving many gifts and I have given one hundred dollars. ... After people have finished giving gifts the pastor counted the money and it was twenty-four thousand dollars. People started dancing to rumba music. We have danced until we were tired. Those who drunk beer have drunk until they were tired, and those who drunk soft drinks have drunk them until they were tired too.

People ate chicken and beef until their stomachs were about to blow out and same to those who are too greedy. Afterwards the pastor said a closing prayer. Everyone who was at that wedding still talks about it. That was the happiest of my life and I wish to do the same when I grow up.

Tinashe Masunda, aged 13: The day I will never forget was one Friday morning. It was a sunny day. I went to school early. We were going for an athletics competition at Mavuradona High School. We boarded a private bus which was hired by our school at 6 a.m. The bus travelled safely and soundly. When we got there we were happy to see different kinds of things. After having our lunch we went to the stadium. We started with traditional dances followed by soccer and athletics. Our

Children's lives are often governed by constraints and routines. Month-ends mean a little extra food, and some lively music in the beerhall. Celebrations such as Christmas and weddings are exciting events to be looked forward to and remembered.



School athletics and competitions are occasions when the children feel a great sense of achievement and reward. These events provide much pleasure and excitement.

school won in the traditional dance section and got a thousand dollars. The boys ... competed in athletics. .... I was in lane number three. The starter blew his whistle and we started running. I ran as fast as I could and I reached the finishing line first. I was given a big and pretty trophy and some money too. I will not forget that day. It is not the prize that makes me not to forget that day but I was the hero.

Soccer, either as a spectator or participation sport, is very popular

Everson Vigne, aged 16: It was Sunday afternoon we were looking forward to watch a soccer match. ... When it was 3 p.m. the match started. The team which was playing with our team beats us every week – always. That day we beat them and they said that it was for that day only. Players of that team ... used to say 'we have played with women' ... but right now our team is the one which is saying 'we have played with women and the men are at work'. When they came to our farm, they don't say anything about soccer because we have driven them away like a snake which has got inside the house. These are things which have made me happy until now.

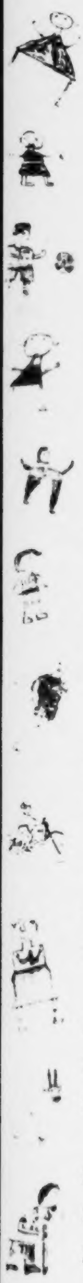
Takawira Chiere, aged 16: I like playing soccer and traditional dance. But I don't like playing with girls, drinking beer, smoking, fighting and stealing from others.

The facilities and opportunities offered at school – otherwise unavailable to the children – are of great value.

However, playing before chores and duties are completed is a serious omission.

Alice Mupambuza, aged 13: When schools come to play the game [soccer] we use the soccer ground. The *murungu* likes it to be [kept] clean all the time.

Tamare Chiutika, aged 11: I was beaten by my mother because I didn't wash the dishes. I was playing *nhodo*. She beat me, and I washed the dishes, and went to play again. Then my sister came and beat me again saying, 'You haven't swept the house.' Then I swept the house and when I finished I cooked sadza.



Forget Karowa aged 13: Diary Book

December, 1998

4th: I went to the farm store [about 5kms] with my friend to buy some meat. Time: 10 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.

5th: We spend 30 mins playing football with my friends. Their names are Dzidai, Cloudy, Malvin and myself. Time: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

6th: We went to forest with my friends to gather for *mazhange*. Time: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m

7th: We went to Mr Garry to make a rockerling [rockery]. Time: 7.30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

8th: I am watching television because of 'Showcase'. Time: 6.50 p.m. to 7.24 p.m.

9th: I went to garden to weed some weeds. Time: 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

10th: Went to forest to gather of *mazhange*. I came back to eat sadza with meat and mangoes. Time; 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

11th: I play *steken* with my friend. Their names Samuel, Batsirai and Trust. Time: 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

12th: We went to forest to gather mushroom and okra with my friends. Time: 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

13th: I dig in the garden with my friend. Time: 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.

14th: I am watching television because of restling [wrestling] wcw. Time: 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.

15th: We went to the farm store to buy some books and bolpen [ball pen]. Time: 4.30 p.m. to 6 p.m.

16th: We went to forest to gather firewood and okra. Time: 9.30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

17th: We went to the farm store to buy some mealie-meal and fresh kapenta. Time: 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

18th: I ride my bicycle. Time: 2 p.m.

19th: We dance to the radio with my friend.

20th: We went to the farm store on a tractor [because the] Rutope River was more water [in flood].

21st: I went [watch] the boys who play Chapter I saw Chabvu [won] more money.

22nd: I spent the blessed day selling sweets and biscuits and bread.

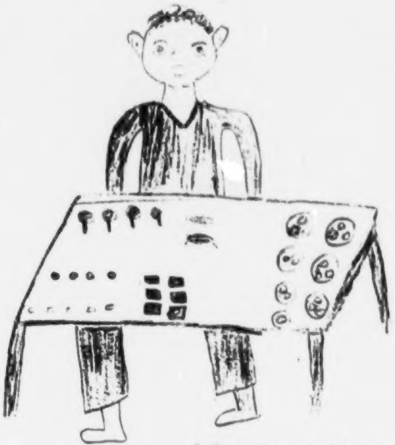
23rd: I was busy weeding in the vegetables. I think its small place. I can spend more days weeding.

24th: I went to the farm store with a tractor to buy cooking rice and meat.

25th: [Christmas Day] I spend the blessed day to eat rice, meat and drink.

26th: We spend blessed day to dance radio and watching television.

Forget Karowa's diary gives us an idea of how children – boys, in particular – in a supportive family but with a little money, can spend their time over the Christmas holidays. The diary tells us what they value, what gives them pleasure and how they are able to contribute to the family's income and well-being.



Selling sweets and fruits.

27th: I was cutting the lon [lawn] and digging the garden and planting flowers and beans and maize. Time: 9 a.m. to 10 a.m.

28th: I drink Mazowe mixed with water and [ate] rice and biscuits. Time: 2.20 p.m.

29th: I went to play football [until the] rain start raining. Time: 3.30 p.m.

30th: I saw Chrispen riding the bicycle. Time: 3 p.m.

31st: I spend the blessed day watching television. I was watching Top 30 Videos. Time: 11 p.m.

January

1st: I was busy playing Die [Dhai]. Time: 3.30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

2nd: I eat mangoes and *mazhange*. Time: 2 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.

3rd: Mr Nyamukawo and Mr Mapfiro pay every children *pacheas*.

4th: I went to play football with my friends.

5th: We went to forest with my brother to gather firewood and mushrooms.

6th: I am selling bread and weeding the weeds.

7th: I went to bath with my friends.

8th: We was busy to playing restling [wrestling] in the ground, 3.30 p.m.

Children on farms have virtually nothing in the way of 'toys', games' equipment or recreational facilities, and yet they succeed in playing and developing a wealth of games with ingeniously varied and complex rules. Usually involving the use of only a ball, stones, bottle tops, or skipping ropes (often made of tree bark), these games provide hours of recreation and happiness: *'not, however, before you have done all the chores, and washed your body, so that no one will disturb you while you are playing'.* (Frank Kagoma, aged 13)

Aeroplanes, Arauri (hop-scotch, ***pada***)

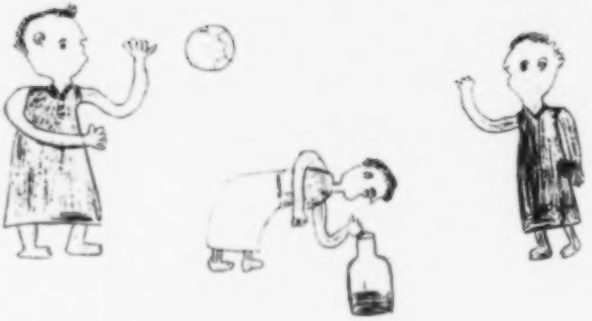
A rectangle is drawn and divided into twelve squares (six pairs, two rows). A stone is placed in the first square of the first row. The player hops down the first row pushing the stone with the hopping foot, into the next square. When they have reached the end of the first row, they say, 'arauri', pick up the stone and hop back down the row. The player continues until they fail to push the stone into the next box, hop onto a line, or fail to hop.

Bhora

Playing catch with a ball.

Frank Kangoma, aged 13: 'Playing ball makes me happy'.

Bottle game



It is played with two teams. One team enters the centre and begins to fill a bottle with earth scooped from the soil. The other team placed on either side throws a ball to each other trying to hit the players in the middle. When they are hit, they are out. The players in the middle win, if they manage to fill the bottle with soil, and then emptying it again to the count of fifty.

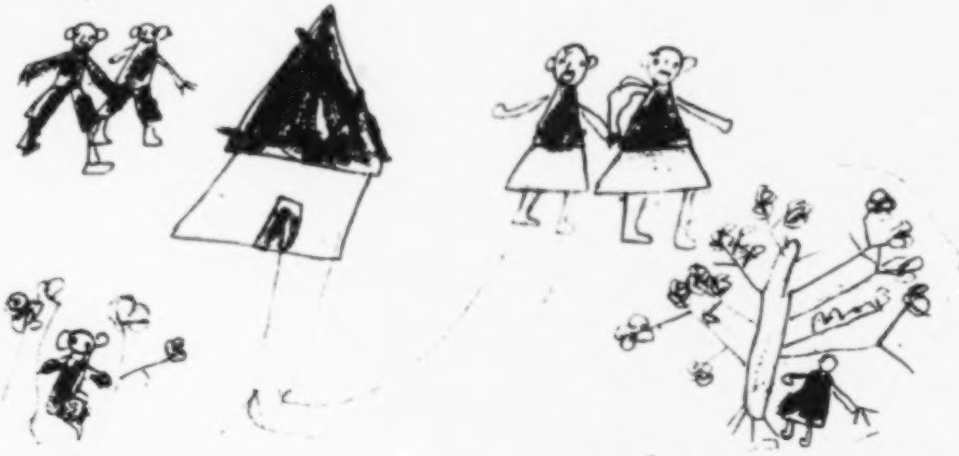
Chapter

Chapter is a children's game. It is played by a group. They will be giving each other chances, with two people at a time. It is played with one cent coins. A coin is put under the hand, and the other player also puts a coin under that hand. If they match, if both sides are the same way up, the person who put the coin in last will be the winner and will take both coins. If they don't match, the person who put the coin in first, wins.

Chisveru (similar to tig)

Fantisen Varent, aged 15: Children are counted into a group. The last one is called '*chisveru*' and he or she will try to catch others in the group. Children play until they are tired. The last person who is '*chisveru*' is teased in song.

Chihwandehwande (hide- and-seek)



We play Chihwandehwande.

Country games

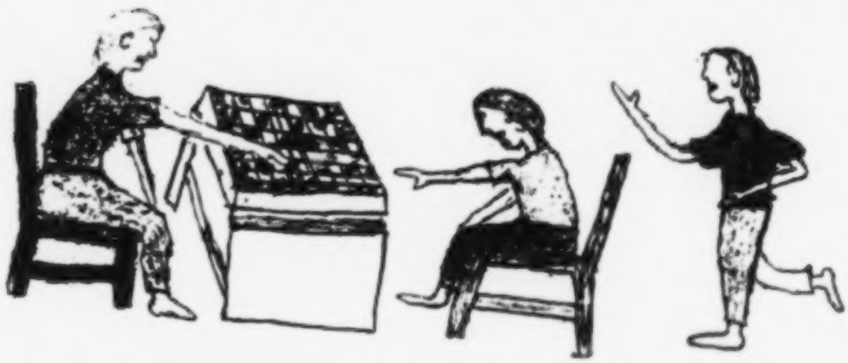
This game begins by drawing three circles one inside the other. The circles will then be sectioned (like a cake) according to the number of players. Each player then identifies a country and is given 1000 points. One player will then enter the innermost circle and call out the name of one of the countries. Everyone will run away but the person whose country is called. They will run to the centre and call, 'stop'. At that moment the other person in the centre will have to jump three steps and try and touch someone. If she succeeds, the person whom she touches will lose 100 points, and if she does not, she will lose 100 points. The winner is the last one out.

Dhai (skipping)

Shainai Amon, aged 14: This game gladdens us a lot. We will be singing, '*Amai vaBeti vanonwa kwakwa zvekutibhe.*'[1] You play *dhai* in threes. [One person skips and two people hold the rope.] We sing, '*Amai abaya kongu nekandiro kawo kekugochera kaye.*[2] *Amamuzonde, doshuwa muzonde, farashuwa muzonde, gaurabhomba serichadhi.*[3]' When you sing this song it is your turn.

Shaudhai Godfrey, aged 14: I like *dhai* because we will be singing a song called '*pot, poto potombi*'.

Draughts



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[1] Beti's mother drinks a lot of beer.

[2] Then she hits out with a roasting pan

[3] The song continues naming the people she hits with each skip

Dunhu

Children outside the circle try to hit those inside the circle with a ball, while the latter try to dodge it.

Football

Tinashe Gwisira 13: I love football because it is important to our country. ... my favourite player is Peter Ndlovu.

High Jump

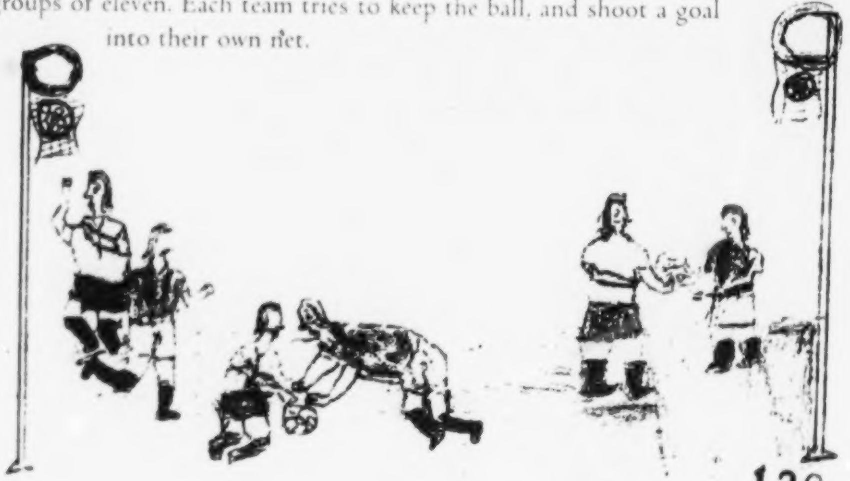
Hwishu (form of rounders)

A form of rounders with only two bases. The ball is kicked rather than hit with a bat. One team takes it in turns to kick, the other to bowl. The former team tries to make runs, and the latter team tries to knock the players out by catching/touching them between bases.

Long jump

Netball

Simon Maposa, aged 15: Netball is played by twenty-two people divided into two groups of eleven. Each team tries to keep the ball, and shoot a goal into their own net.



Nhodo (form of jacks)

A pebble is thrown into the air, while the player tries to scoop other pebbles from a small circle drawn on the ground. Then, leaving first one (then 2, 3, 4, etc.) pebbles behind, the player throws the ball and pushes the pebbles back into the circle. Play moves to one's opponent if you do not scoop the stones, or catch the thrown pebble, or fail to leave the required number of pebbles outside the circle.

Pada (similar to hop-scotch)

William Fonzo, aged 13: Those who are good at *pada* can play holding water. Many people like it because it gladdens them.

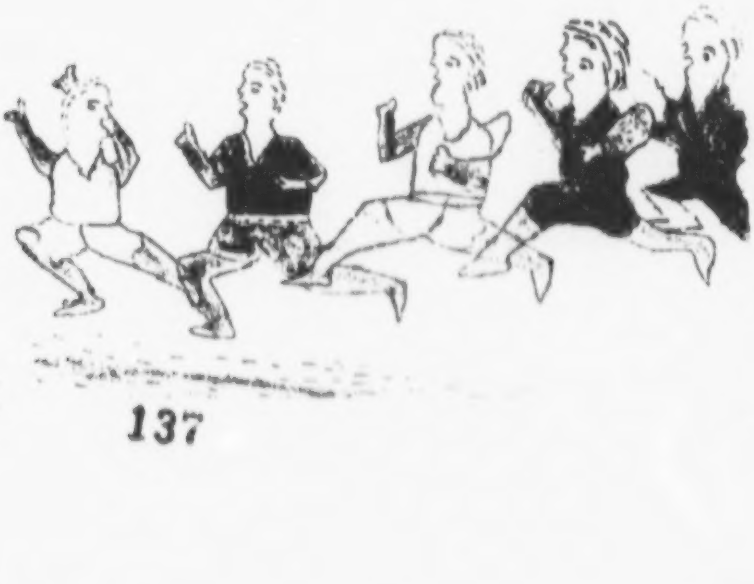
Christine Maruza, aged 13: It is a nice game and also a time consolation.

Raka-raka (form of rounders)

There are four bases at four points of a square. One team runs round and round from one base to another, counting each round, while the other team tries to hit the players with a ball. Once hit, the player is out.

Running

Freddy Elijah, aged 16: Running: I like running because it makes my legs strong ... and I can win things like textbooks. ... the first one to win a race will win a huge prize ... an English textbook, the second will win an exercise book and a pen.



Soccer

Charles Mupedzi, Tapiwa Chitonga, Innocent Kavhu, aged 13: If you play soccer you need training every day. We do that because it is a game which is played by all countries. ... It is good because it makes your body healthy. ... If you play soccer you wear shorts and a uniform. ... When I grow up I want to be the best player in Zimbabwe.

Frank Kagoma, aged 13: When you are playing people will be singing a song, '*Vakomana vekwedu vanotamba kusangangueshumba, vabnu kusangananeshumba*'[4]

Swimming

Tsoro (similar to draughts)

Esther Kenias, aged 12: I like *tsoro* because I play it while I am happy. I play it when my heart is pure white.

Frank Kagoma, aged 13: *Tsoro* is played by two people. You dig eighteen holes [in nine pairs]. You find twenty-four stones and you put two stones in each hole.

Volley ball

Dzonga Kanyonganise, aged 15: We farm children are mischievous because we don't have other things to do. We play in places which are out of bounds [like] the whiteman's fields.

Max Chamada, aged 9: It was on Tuesday, we went to the forest to play *chisveru*. I was with Beat, Godfill and Wirinayi. On our way we met Derino and she asked us where we were going, and she said if you are going to swim in the river it has flooded. When we were in the forest we climbed a tree. Beat told us to go back home and we said that we would not, and we kept on playing. Then a swarm of bees came towards the tree [that] I was climbing. Then I jumped and fell on my stomach and was hurt. Beat

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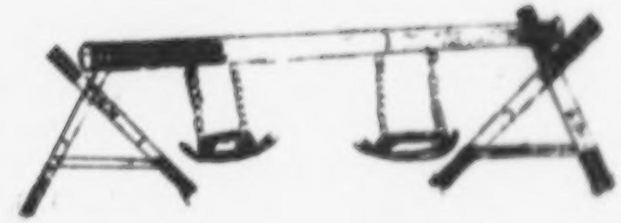
[4] These are our boys who play like lions, who play like lions

If there is a crèche on the farm, a slide, a see-saw and swings are usually provided.

At home, children have to make their own entertainment and, just like children everywhere, they can get into mischief.

Recreation and play are not part of every child's life.

The beerhall is sometimes the only place for the adults to relax.



started laughing and saying, 'I'm going to tell your mother' and he did. My mother sent people to catch me and they did. My mother beat me with a stick and the stick got broken. Then she found another stick and I ran away to my aunt's house. Then my aunt went and talked nicely to my mother and it ended that way.

Jameson Chadzuma, aged 11: It was on Wednesday, 10th February 1999. I was playing on the road. There were five cars, all coming from Mazowe. I was coming from the bus stop. It was in the afternoon. I was run over by a car. I was carried by an ambulance. I was given an injection and medicine to put on my wounds called spirit. I put the medicine after taking a bath. The car then went to the police camp. The driver was placed in jail for five years.

Lloyd, aged 13: ... We children we go to the garden while elders are there. I stay with my grandfather and my problem is that I will be sent long distances while elders are there. But I'm still young, only thirteen years old. And this makes us children to be unhappy and it is not good. They tell us to fetch water [while] they are there. We will be working [while] they don't. We are not allowed to go and play with our friends. They will tell us to go and weed the field. And we are the ones who are suffering while they are just seated. If you have to go and watch a soccer match on Sundays you will be breaking rules. These are the problems in my life.

Grace Njanji, aged 10: Some parents fail to send their children to school because the father and mother drink beer.

Denny, aged 16: When our parents drink beer they are forgetting about us. The money they use to drink beer is the one we will be looking forward to [using to] pay our school fees.

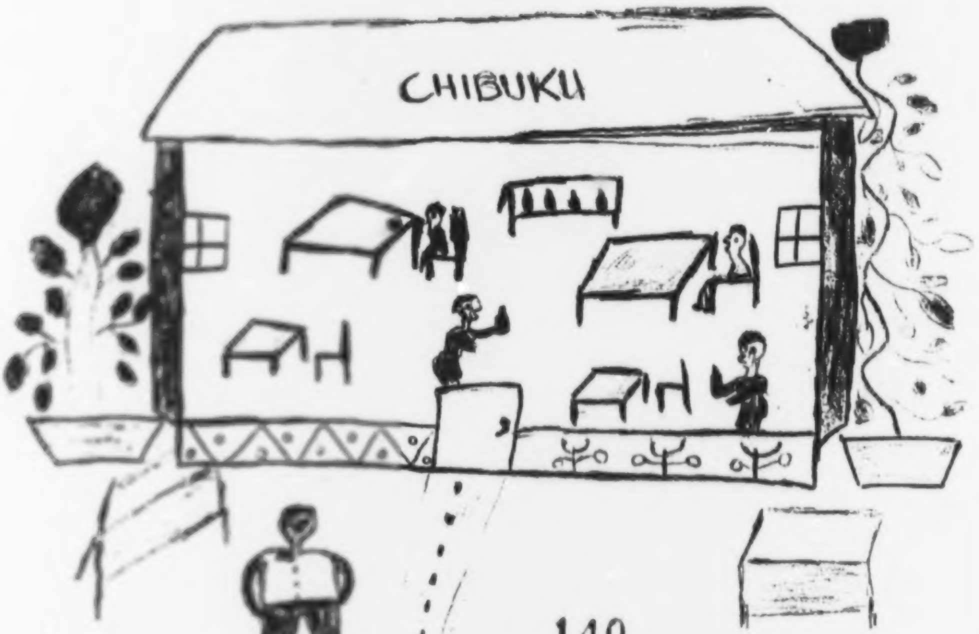
Tutu, aged 13: The father might earn $700 a month and he might take $100 for food and spend the rest on drinking and girlfriends. They make their friends

happy because they want others to see them as good people. They give their money to their friends and when it is finished they start fighting and want their money back.

Tafadzwa Nyakunda, aged 11: After pay day some fathers waste money in the beer gardens, forgetting the children at home.

Tenderai, aged 14: My father drinks a lot [and] sometimes quarrels with my mother ... but we are happy most of the time.

Shamiso, aged 13: I haven't seen a cruel man like him. ... During the first days my father's brother was not working. He used to go to the beerhall early in the morning. Many people were sick and tired of his behaviour. When uncle get drunk he begins shouting my mother and this hurt me so much.



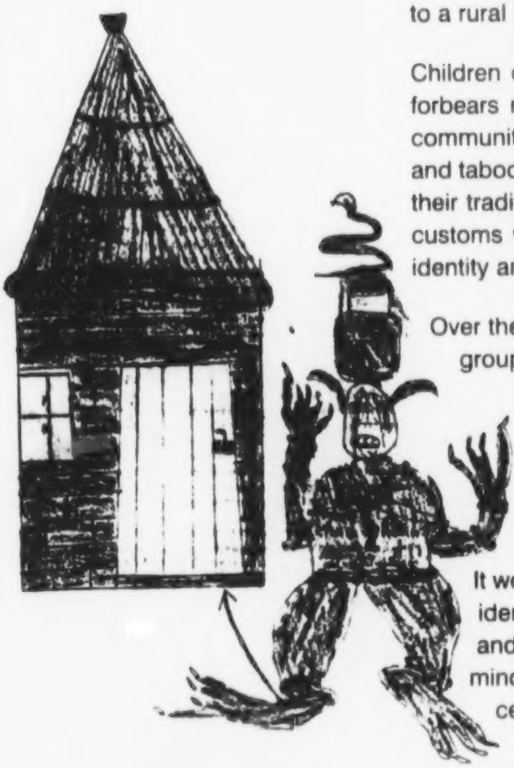
Our customs

'In Zimbabwe we live as one family but we come from different countries.'
Eunice Marima, aged 13

'At the farm ... there are many tribes and we have different languages and doings.'
Tichaona Mushonga, aged 14

Farm villages are comparatively isolated communities. Farmworkers move between farms and some move between the rural areas and the farms or may retire to a rural home in Zimbabwe.

Children on the farms today regard themselves as Zimbabweans although their forbears may have come from Zambia, Mozambique or Malawi. Each family or community – be it religious or ethnic – has its marriage and funeral rites, its totems and taboos, its traditional songs and dances, but the children may not be aware of their traditional and cultural context. They have, however, a sense of the different customs which distinguished their original communities, giving them a sense of identity and place.



Over the years, the customs and traditions of the different religious and ethnic groups have influenced each other, but how, and to what extent, is not clear. However many of the features which children see as distinctive may not be as different as they might think when looking at the overall picture. Indeed one distinctive feature of the farm communities would seem to be the degree of tolerance and acceptance of different religious practices, customs and languages

It would appear that the Malawians have retained the strongest sense of their identity as manifested in the *chinamwari* and *zvigure* initiation ceremonies and dances. However, those who continue to practise these rites are a minority in any farm village; the children do not know a great deal about the ceremonies and their knowledge is coloured by the fear of a secret, minority practice with strong taboos surrounding them.

Similarly, many of the farm communities have a variety of churches, each with its own set of distinctive beliefs. No attempt was made to try and find out more about them for this publication.

For a deeper understanding of the cultures from which the customs derived, the interaction and cross-fertilization of practice and idea through inter-marriage and proximity within one village, more inter-active research would be required to enable us to have a better understanding of the complexities of this community as a whole.

This chapter is therefore impressionistic. It reflects a kalaidescope of the children's beliefs, and their ideas about what distinguishes them as individuals or families within their community.

Leonard Corffat, aged 15: We come from Mozambique ... I don't know [where in Mozambique] I have just been told that we come from Mozambique. ... My grandparents are here in Zimbabwe.

Grace Njanji, aged 10: My father is from Zambia, my mother is Zezuru. My father tells me nothing about Zambia because he was young when he left.

Rose Kamundi: My grandfather comes from Malawi and my grandmother from Mozambique.

Zondani Zinge, aged 15: We come from Madziwa and our chief is Mupata.

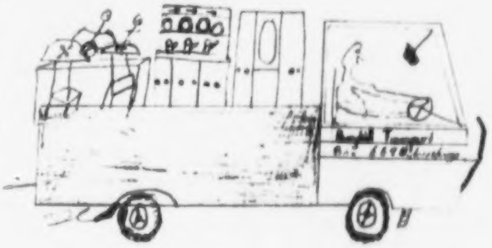
Edson Kapfudza, aged 14: I'm a Zimbabwean and my parents are also. We are Korekores and our totem is an elephant with horns. We stay nicely with people of different tribes who come from other countries.

Star Rupaso, aged 14: I'm a Zimbabwean. My father is a Zimbabwean but his father is from Mozambique ... my mother's parents are Zambian.

Medicine Ziyaye, aged 14: I'm a Zimbabwean, my parents come from Mozambique. ...What causes people to move from one country to another is shortage of jobs.

Eustinah Jiri, aged 13: I am a Zimbabwean, my parents are Zambians. ... The culture is different. Zambians don't eat animals which die on their own. If they do, they will have heart problems. They like eating dried meat. They do not like eating

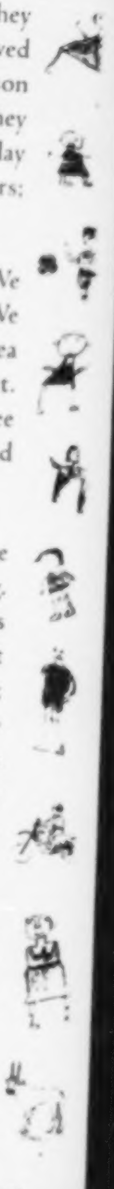
Many members of the farm-working community have relatives who originally came from Zambia, Malawi or Mozambique.



Very often one parent has married a Zimbabwean, which means there is a home in the rural areas.

Customs have changed and traditions have been subject to influence but family memory provides identities and demarcates differences, although objectively these may no longer exist outside the minds of the family or the community.

rabbits, pigs, rock rabbits and ducks. They go to a church called WorldWide. They wear white clothes when going to the church. At their church they are not allowed to cry at a funeral because they will spoil the dead's journey. When an elder person has died, they will have a small party after four weeks. They call it *nyaradzo*[1]. They will brew beer for the soul of the dead to look after the family. *Chisi* is the day they are not allowed to do any work. They like staying nicely with neighbours; they don't like misunderstandings.

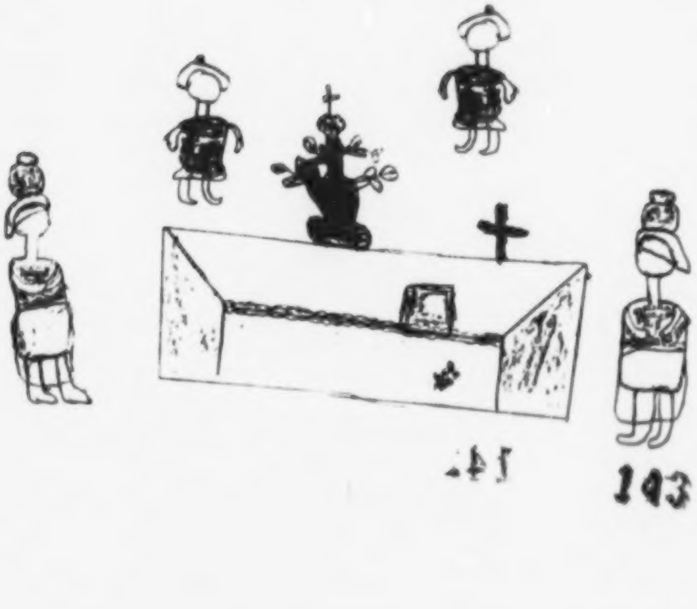


Totems and taboos, marriage and funeral rites, differences of dress, ritual, customs and manners are all perceived and acknowledged by children. Their views reflect both the norms and the prejudices of their communities as well as the apparently arbitrary nature of some of the definitions and the similarity of seemingly different practices.

Shame Nakaro, aged 14: I am a muChawa and my father and mother are Zambian. We speak Chewa at home. We Chewas come from Malawi. We can't go to Malawi. We are now staying here in Zimbabwe. ... All our relatives are here. At our rural area we pray facing west. People in Malawi are not people to play with. They can hurt. They won't eat meat that has not been cut by a muChewa. In this country we see different things. In Malawi when burying someone, the person will face west and sleep to the left. Here in Zimbabwe they sleep to the right.

Miriam Chiwanza, aged 13: I am a Zimbabwean but my parents are Zambians. ... The eating [habits] of Zimbabweans are different from Zambians, the same with dressing. Zimbabweans like eating sadza and meat; Zambians like white rice ... Zimbabweans like wearing long clothes and short; Zambians like wearing clothes which are open at the front and at the back. Zimbabweans work very hard, but earn very little wages; Zambians do not work very hard, but they earn more wages. In Zimbabwe we use dollars, in Zambia they use kwachas. In Zimbabwe when a baby dies that has not been outside the house, we don't cry, we just bury the baby. When a man dies without having a child in his life, when burying him, his waist will be tied by a rope or a mouse or a mealie-cob.

Orippah Jairos, aged 14: I come from Zambia. I was born in Zimbabwe. Our language is different from the one spoken by people here. We don't eat pigs, monkeys, porcupines and crocodiles. When we want to eat we clap hands. When a daughter is mature, she will be sent to elders to be taught what to do when she gets married. When there is a funeral of a young child, we don't cry. When we are going to



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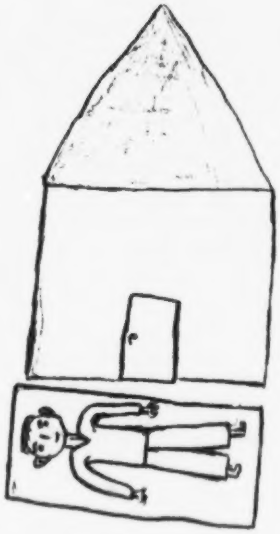
[1] Literally meaning comfort or consolation.

bury the child, people will sing a goodbye song. If it is an older person who has died, after some days they will do a small party called *runyaradzo*[2] and give the dead's things – clothes, blankets, pots – to others.

Unity Mutandayai, aged 15: I live in Zimbabwe but my parents are from Malawi. Their rules are different. Every month my parents have a party. They buy a goat or a chicken and when it is killed, they will take the blood and cook it. When it is cooked they will eat it. It is called *susu*. Malawians don't eat animals which have died on their own, and they don't eat animals which has been killed by someone who is not of their tribe. They wear white clothes and hats called *tusote* when they are at a party. The language they use is different. In Malawi, every month the young children go to *chinamwari* to be taught good manners. When someone has died, they are not allowed to cry, they will sing. When they are going to bury the dead, they first place the dead at the door entrance. They will read from their book and then bury the person.



A funeral.

Partipher Paniso, aged 13: I am a muChewa, my father comes from Malawi. Now we are living in Zimbabwe. Where we stay, we stay nicely; there are no people who insult others saying, 'you are a Chewa' or 'you come from Malawi'. We go to church called BICC. We worship the Lord. When we are eating we first pray and then we eat. We pray for everything at home. When going to bed, we pray so that we can sleep nicely. ... At a funeral, many people will be crying for the deceased. They will be crying inside the house. When it is time for the burial, women don't go to the grave. That's what we do at our rural area in Malawi.

Owen Chirwa, aged 17: I am a Zimbabwean and my parents are Zimbabweans. Our family totem is a rat. On our farm we stay with people of different tribes from different countries. ... When a baby dies we don't cry out, we just drop tears, but if it is an older person, we cry out. The body of the dead will stay at home for just one day. The next morning people will go to dig a grave. They will give money we call *chemo*. The money is used to buy food to be eaten at the funeral. First thing in the morning on the following day, people will go to the grave to see if the body is still there, or if it has been unearthed by witches.

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[2] Literally meaning comfort or consolation

Generally, it is the parents of the current workers who immigrated – the grandparents of today's children – so customs, traditional songs and dances have become diffused with time, but the children have all been told something about them.

Takaruza Spencer, aged 15: I live in Zimbabwe. My father is a Zimbabwean but he married a wife from Malawi. ... When we bury the dead, we dig a big pit so that if it rains the water won't reach the dead. After two years, we brew beer to bring back the soul of the dead to help look after the family. ...

Tichaona Mushonga, aged 14: At the farm where we live, there are many tribes and we have different languages and doings. [My family's] rural area is Murewa. We speak Zezuru. In our tribe when we want to kill a cow, we cut the neck with an axe. When we want to eat, we first pray. When we go to bed, we also pray. When my sister wants to get married, she first tells the aunt or the grandmother and the aunt will tell the girl's father. If the son-in-law wants to marry, first he must bring money. When an older person dies, we are supposed to cry. If it is a baby, we don't cry. We will bury it in white clothes.

Sipelile Musaripa, aged 13: I am a Zimbabwean and my parents are Zimbabweans. Dressing of Zimbabweans is different from Zambians. They like wearing long clothes and we like wearing short clothes which open at the front ... when it comes to marriages [Zambians] some first have sex with their fathers and some run away ... in Zimbabwe when a girl dies without being married, people don't do a memorial service for her.

Erick Hama, aged 14: I'm a Zimbabwean. My father comes from Mount Darwin. My mother is a Zimbabwean but her father comes from Mozambique. ...Our totem is *Soko Murehwa*.[3] When we bury someone we throw *tsiro* on the grave. ... When we buy livestock we first consult the ancestors; if we don't do that the livestock will just die or disappear. We ask the ancestors before we buy any property.

When someone dies, we believe that person will come back to his or her family. We will brew beer. The beer is for penances. Early in the morning we will put beer in the *pfuko* and then go to the grave and break the pot and when we come back we start drinking beer and being happy. But in the happiness we will be thinking about the dead. Later we brew some more beer for relatives to be together, so that the dead's clothes will be shared among us.

Shanziyo Madzonganyika, aged 13: Our family is Zimbabwean ... when you want to marry you first pay money called *tsvagirai kuno*. Then you will be given the daughter. ... On our farm when you want to marry, you first tell your father, then he will tell the girl's father, and he will say, 'Take her!' We go to church on

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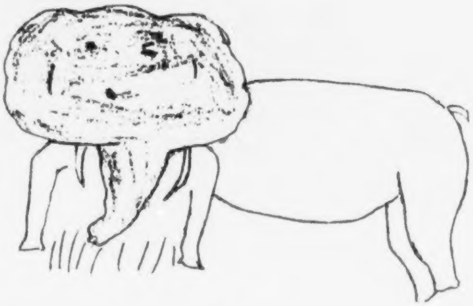
[3] A totem, the sacred animals being a monkey, *tsoko*.

Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. The church does not allow us to drink or to smoke, or to wear dark woollen clothes. We don't go to the fields on Thursdays and we don't eat sadza and meat on that day, and we don't look for firewood. When someone dies we will tie our heads with a white cloth which shows that there is a funeral.



Paradzai Reza, aged 13: Our totem is a zebra. My mother's totem is an elephant with horns. Our language is Zezuru. We don't eat monkeys, otters, hares, pigs and porcupines.

Mary Muoni, aged 11: I am a Zimbabwean, we speak Karanga at home ... if you want to marry there are ways of asking that is *kumema*.[4] If you have a boyfriend you must show him to your aunt first. When you have spoken to the aunt, the girl will give clothes to the boy, and the boy will give clothes to the girl. ... If you are a boy who has been married in a good way and your wife has died, you will be given her younger sister. That was done long ago. ... We are not allowed to be married to people of the same totem.

Eunice Marima, aged 13: I'm a Zimbabwean. ... When a boy or girl reaches the age of getting married, they first tell [the] aunt or grandmother, saying, 'Aunt, I want to be married'. If she agrees, she will tell the father. If the father also agrees, he will tell all the relatives together. When they are all together, the father will say, 'Our child wants to get married, what do you think about it?' If the relatives are agreed, they will plan the day for the marriage, and they will call the son-in-law to bring the money. We pray when we are kneeling, and we also close our eyes. When we are praying to our ancestors, we will be seated; grandmother will be *detemba*[5] and grandchildren will be clapping.

Passmore Tayero, aged 14: I'm a Zimbabwean, my parents come from Mozambique. Our totem is *Phiri*[6]. We wear *zvikwa*[7]. ...We pray while standing. When getting married, we will first send a messenger, called a *dombo*, to tell the girl's father. ... When we are buying someone, we first put him on a reed mat and then cover the person with blankets ...

My father.

My mother.

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[4] To look at possibilities before announcing one's intentions – courtship.

[5] Reciting supplications

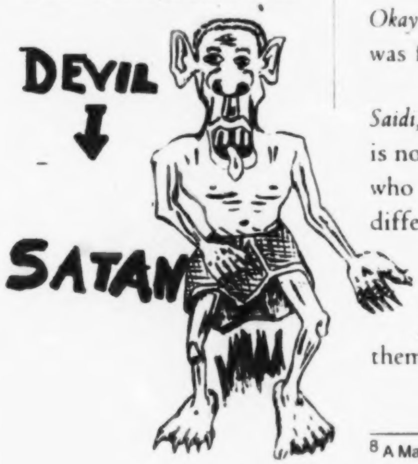
[6] Monkey

[7] Short grass skirt

Many languages and dialects are spoken in the farm villages e.g. Chewa, Nyanja, Shona, Ndebele, Sitola[8], etc. However, today's children do not always fully understand the languages spoken by the grandparents.

Rainmaking ceremonies, traditional dancing, and various forms of religion and Christianity: Zimbabwe Apostolic Faith, Tariro, Zaojah and Ambacook Mugodhi, Jericho, Marange, Fellowship, Mugande, etc. co-exist within the different communities.

Some traditions will inevitably fade away or change with the new generation of children who have been to school. And despite the perceived disparity of cultural practices, the different religious and traditional beliefs, and the different languages used within the farm villages, there is a strong sense of community, at least as reflected through the children.



Mike, aged 17: My grandparents sing traditional songs and I can't sing them because they will be singing in Nyanja.

Memory Bulaundi, aged 12: We are Zimbabwean but my grandfather is the one who comes from Malawi. My father can speak Malawian. My grandfather tells me stories but I don't understand them because he doesn't speak Shona.

Anna Malunga, aged 11: They [my parents] don't want to go back to Malawi, because when they go back, they don't know the language they speak there.

Lloyd, aged 12: In our village two languages are spoken, Shona and Chichewa. I don't like this because someone might say bad words about you, and you can smile, not knowing what they are saying.

Winnie, aged 15: In our community the languages which are spoken are Shona, Tonga, Ndawu and Nyanja. But I know how to speak other people's languages.

Tawadzwa Nyakunda, aged 11: At Christmas there will be traditional dance and soccer. Traditional dance is for the past. They will be covered in mud and they will be wearing masks.

Tafadzwa Kapangura, aged 15: My parents are Christians. ... On Sunday we go to church called Family of God. We go for church because it is for Christians. I obey my church because people in the church are very happy.

Okay Rangarirai, aged 16: In the 1980s there was traditional dance but then a church was formed and it was no longer allowed.

Saidi, aged12: Where I live there are Zaoja and Jowani Masowe churches. I think it is not good to have different churches because if you go to Jowani Masowe, those who go to Zaoja will hate you. I speak Nyanja at home but where I live many different languages are spoken – Nyanja, cheChewa and many others. Some we don't understand.

Junior, aged 12: It is not good to have satanic churches because if you go to them, you can get killed. And you won't have done anything.

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[8] A Manyika dialect named after the nationalist leader, Ndabaningi Sithole

Simbaraike, aged 12: I go to the Salvation Army church. Where I live there are many churches: Salvation Army, Apostolic, Methodist, Zaoga, Roman Catholic and CCAP. This is good, because everyone will choose the church he or she would like to go to.

Winnie, aged 15: I think it is good to have many churches because everyone will go to the church that he or she likes.

Givemore Zulu, aged 15 and Makanyara Moffat aged, 13: I like staying on the farm … We do many different games such as *zvigure*, soccer, *mashave*, *mabhadhi*, and even church. We have churches like Zion, Zioja, Zaka Zuruva, Soldiers of God, Salvation Army, Johane Masowe and Tariro. If there is a funeral we are given wood for making the coffin and money for mealie-meal and things needed at the funeral. When it is Christmas Day, a cow will be killed. Even termites we don't buy, we just trap them on the anthills.

Dances are associated with particular occasions as well as with enjoyment; with belief systems as well as with pleasure.

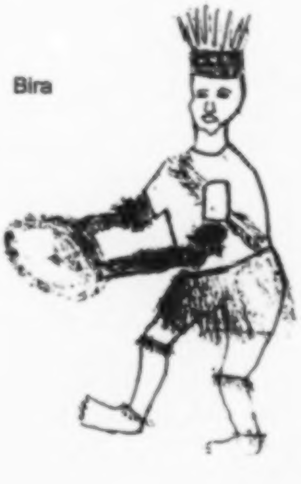
The children know the names of the different dances.

Zondani Zinge, aged 15: I like dancing to gospel songs. One song we sing is: 'Elias is gone. He has gone to hell. If you don't want to go there, leave satanic things.' It just goes on like that. (But I can't sing it properly.)

Grace Njanji, aged 10: I like singing and dancing. We do it in the mountain at Chamasi [when] we wanted rainfall. We will be singing and dancing to the drums and eating. I will not allow my children to go to traditional dancing because they will learn bad manners such as eating uncooked meat and covering themselves with mud.

Pauline Chimombe and Fungisai Notice, aged 12 and 15: It is danced for the dead. It is danced by many people. They make a circle and they go into the middle in threes and fours. The dance gladdens us a lot. People will be singing liberation songs. One is called *'VaMuzorewa chiregai makauraya vana venya, tarirai vechimurenga, vanofarira mudzimu mukuru'*.[9] The song reminds us of Zimbabwean heroes who died long ago. When they have finished dancing, they go and put the spirits in the graveyard. Then they sing again and then they go back home and everything would be finished. We like this dance very much because it makes us remember the national heroes who have died for our country.

Bira



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[9] Mr Muzorewa stop crying, you killed your own children; look up to the children of the *chimurenga*: who are excited by the powerful ancestral spirits.

Chimutare

Shylet Williams and Susan Chimusau, aged 17 and 13: *Chimutare* is danced by people wearing traditional clothes. Men will wear animal skins around their waists and a crown made of feathers. I like this dance because it is done during times of war. *Chimutare* is not a Zimbabwean dance, it has come here from another country. People will be singing and dancing. It makes people happy and it is very popular. We saw it on television and we hear [the music] on the radio.

Chipawo

Never Ndekelenga and Martin Tembo, aged 17 and 15: *Chipawo* is danced by young children, boys and girls. Children who dance *chipawo* will be wearing *basho* on their legs. Others will be beating drums, playing *hosho* and *mbira*, other will be singing and celebrating. *Chipawo* is also found in Zambia. It is now done on television in Zimbabwe. *Chipawo* is not different from dances done by our ancestors and it reminds us of them. When we celebrate independence *chipawo* is a nice dance.

Honda

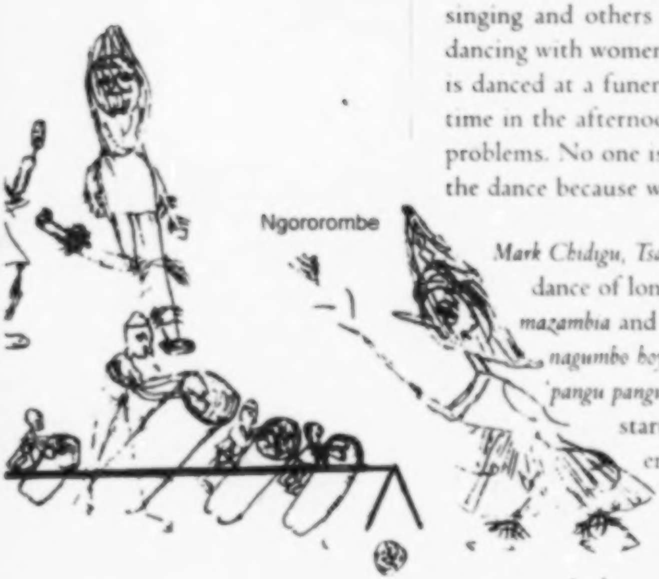
Tsitsi Piano, aged 13: *Honda* is danced by men and women. They each tie a cloth over their clothes and around their waists. They form a circle and two or three people will be dancing inside the circle. The people in the circle will be singing different songs, clapping their hands, and playing drums. *Honda* is danced at a funeral when the person who has died is not a Christian. It can also be danced for fun.

Jiti

Florence Kadomba and Patience Chimusau, aged 16 and 14: It is a dance which is done by elders and children. When they dance they make a circle. One of them will start singing and others will join in. Men will be beating drums and others will be dancing with women. They will be wearing clothes of different colours. The dance is danced at a funeral or a memorial service when we brew beer. It is done at any time in the afternoon or the evening. It gladdens us and makes us forget all our problems. No one is [specially] invited, you just hear the joy and join in. We like the dance because when I am dancing I forget that one day it will be my funeral.

Ngororombe

Mark Chidigu, Tsambarikagwa, Gift and Lawrence Mukata aged 14, 16, 15 and 14: This dance of long ago makes us happy. It is from Zambia. Women will be wearing *mazambia* and wearing beads round their necks. People sing, *'nagumbo hoyehoye nagumbo hoyehoye'*[10]. Then they start dancing. The drums will [be] saying *'pangu pangu'* which gladdens us a lot. If you are seated you will stand and start dancing. You won't even want to sit down because you will be enjoying it so much, and you will want to beat the drums.



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[10] Move your legs, ho ho   Move your legs, yes yes.

Zvigure

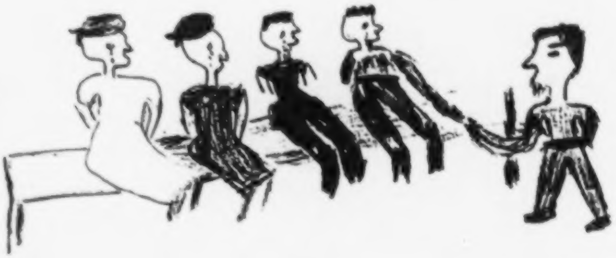
The dancers are all given names. The tallest one is called, Makanje. The one with a horn on his head is called Kamupini. The dancers wear torn clothes. They wear *bosho* round their legs. They paint their faces. It is danced by men and boys only. It is a dance of Zambia and Malawi. It makes us happy and that is why we say, *'mbudzi, kudya mufenje kafana nyina'*[11].

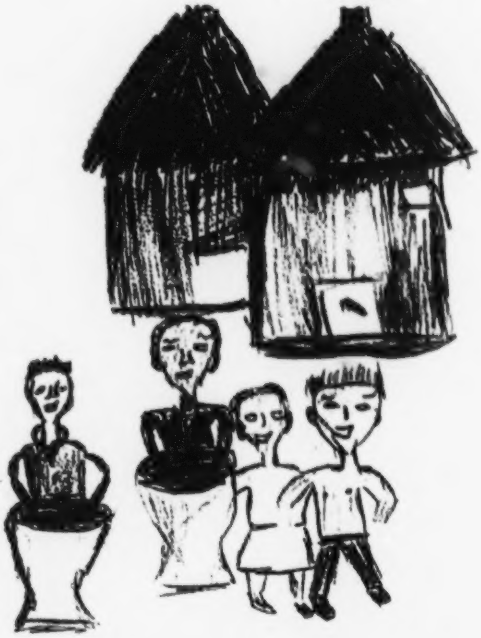
Muchongoyo

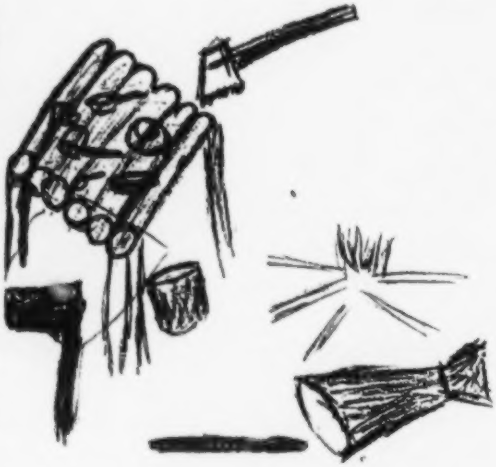
The dancers wear black and white clothes. It is danced by people who eat uncooked meat, and who bath themselves with beer.

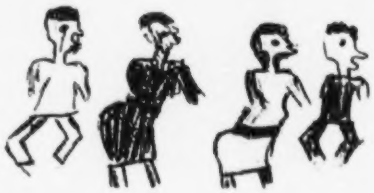
Mashave

We dance while playing drums and *bosho*.









Ndombola jive
Traditional dance

Barbra Julius and Marizani, aged 14 and 15: We also dance to radio music and we hear band music and percussion. Most dances are done during the weekend. The school teaches us percussion. Marimbas and *mbira* are played at the weekend. My favourite dance is disco played with gramophone records. People dance not in one style but everyone dances the way he or she wishes.

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[11] Like mother, like daughter.

Chinamwari and *zvigure*, two similar but different initiation ceremonies, take place on some farms.

Nhamo, aged 11: I haven't been to [*chinamwari*] I just heard about it. People will be beaten, and others will be given money. Their heads will be shaved.

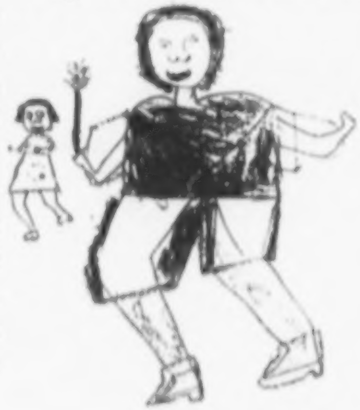
Leonard Corffat, aged 15: What I know [at *chinamwari*] is that they eat relish without salt when they have just joined traditional dance. ... And they [those who participate] will be captured for one week because they want to follow rules.

Nearly all the children we spoke to denied much knowledge of *chinamwari* practices, which are strictly secret, but they had their own ideas about what happens and most did not wish to become involved.

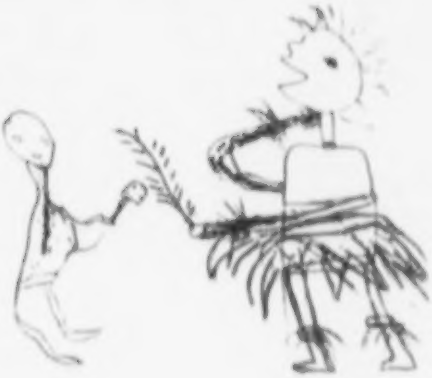
January Dzikoma, aged 12: I don't like traditional dance because you will be beaten. And if they are your enemies, you can faint. And after that you pay money and go to *chinamwari*. And when you are there you are not allowed to talk to anyone unless you are given money. When you go back home, after one week, that's when you will be allowed to eat relish with salt. Traditional dancers wear torn clothes and masks. Long back, girls and boys used to do traditional dance, but now only boys are joining.

Chinamwari is an initiation ritual which is still practised in some communities by the Malawians. Normally it is held for the young men/boys in the community who attend the ceremonies and are circumcised. Both they and the adults who participate in the rituals are sworn to silence. Thus little is known about them, although many opinions are held.

Lovemore Mashapure, aged 13: In the village there is a girl who went to *chinamwari*. She was carried by a *chigure* on the shoulders She was wearing beads round her neck, waist and hands – red and white and different ones ... they were shining and very attractive. What happened is this girl stayed [inside the house] for ten days. She was not allowed to go outside and she had to eat food without salt, and porridge without sugar. It is hard to eat relish without salt. And she wasn't allowed to talk to anyone, not the leaders of the *chigure* nor the other servants. If you wanted to talk to her, you gave her three dollars and you talked for two hours and fifteen minutes. After these days she was released and she was carried by a *chigure* and she sat on a reed mat. The girl's mother placed a red bead on the plate where the *chigure* could see it. Then the *chigure* started to beat the girl on the stomach with a stick. Then the mother then took the bead from the plate, and she started talking about discipline, thanking the leaders and the women who were there.



Later [this girl] was married by a boy. They have stayed together for a whole year without any problems. The man started being mad with her after two years, because of not having a baby. ... It was a matter for her to go back to her family. Then she went back to her parents and explained everything to them. ... And they went to *n'angas* but that did not work.



Plaxedis Makombe, aged 14: I know a boy who went to *chinamwari*. His name is Seremani. He stayed four weeks at *chinamwari*. Then he went back home and he didn't talk to anyone for one week. When his friends, the one he used to play with, called him with the name he had used before, he became very sad because he was no longer using that name. He even called the boys he had stayed with at *chinamwari* and told them to beat [the boys who were calling him by his former name]. He was sent to *chinamwari* because he used to steal his father's money. Sometimes he sent other children to steal from their parents. One day he stole $150. Then he bought things such as rice, beer, meat, sugar, salt, milk and two loaves of bread. He [and his friends] took their mother's pots. They had their party in the forest. They ate and drank beer and then they went back home, but they couldn't see the road.

Zvigure is also an initiation ritual, but circumcision does not take place.

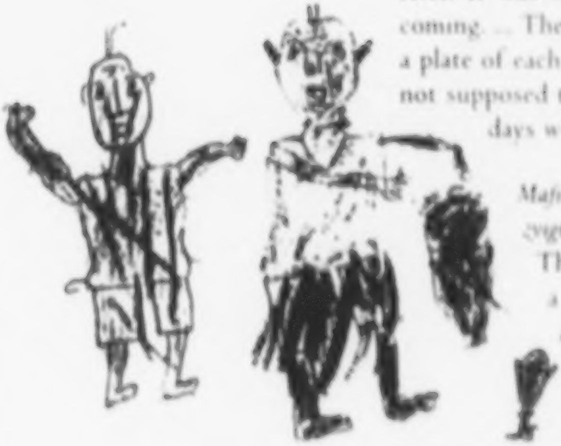
It is sometimes explained that parents send their children to *chinamwari* or *zvigure* if they want them disciplined and many asides to the effect that children would not want to attend because they would be beaten.

Dickson Kabadura, aged 15: A boy called Aaron have joined *zvigure*. They have joined while they were three. One of them ran away after they had been beaten and he went to his home. The day they joined *zvigure* they ate uncooked chicken. The reason that caused Aaron to join *zvigure* was that he had a friend called Julius who is a player, and so he used to follow him. On one Saturday evening, Julius visited his home. Aaron wasn't there ... his mother said that he had gone to take a bath in the river. Julius ran to the *zvigure's* mountain and he dressed in their clothes. Then he went down to the river and he watched Aaron and saw him dancing *zvigure* dances, and then he saw him taking a bath. His head was covered in soap. Then the *chigure* caught Aaron and beat him. Then another one came and they carried him toward the mountain. He was crying and they were beating their drums. The boy kept quiet when he got tired. After five days he was beaten by the headman while others were beating drums. When he was freed, his face had swelled because of being beaten. He only started talking to people after ten days. He walked facing down.

There are certain cult rules which cannot be disobeyed. *Zvigure* dances cannot be imitated, even in fun by children; *zvigure* dancers in their traditional costume cannot be addressed; *zvigure* rites cannot be discussed or explained. To do so is to invite retaliation.

Steven Gaviao, aged 12: In the village where I live there is another girl who went to *chinamwari che zvigure* ... she was carried by a *chigure*. [What caused this was] that she was selfish. When she saw *zvigure* she thought they were useless ... her boyfriend was one of the *zvigure* dancers and she [always] wanted to talk to him when he was dressed up [in his *zvigure* dance costume. This is strictly forbidden.] The other dancers did not like this. Her mother is the one who allowed her to be captured because she was silly. No one in the village was happy to see a girl become a *chigure* dancer. We, as children, we didn't say anything. We just heard the elders talking about it. The elders said, '*kakara kununa kudya kamwe*'[12]. They say she has got what she wanted. When she was released, they said, 'Do you want to be shy or not?' and she said, 'I don't want to be, because you are the ones who got me to do things that I didn't want to do.' Then people said, 'it is not our fault, it is your impudence.' At last, she said: 'I'm sorry, I won't do it again'.

Tichaona Chindoiura, aged 14: There was a boy who went to *chinamwari* in 1996 during school holidays. Before he left, he told me to write letters to him. ... His life was hard. He wasn't allowed to be seen outside or to sleep at home. They have stayed in the forest for four weeks. If you want to send something, you ring the bell, and the person who looks after them, will come out. No one was allowed who wasn't of that tribe. Women were not allowed to go there. From the house [in which they were staying] to the bell was thirty metres [away]. ... The day they were supposed to leave came, they burned their grass fence in the evening. They went back home in the middle of the night while all the people were asleep. Before sunrise, first thing early in the morning, they went to the river. It was Sunday morning. We just heard them singing while they were coming. ... They sat on a mat made of reeds and people started to put money on a plate of each and every one of them. ... They were given a rule that they were not supposed to talk to anyone unless they were given money. He stayed many days without going to school.



Mafia Luis, aged 15: There was a boy in our village who liked dancing *zvigure* all the time. He was seen dancing *zvigure* by the leaders of *zvigure*. They took him to their dressing place and they told him to give them a chicken from his parents. They did this. The boy stayed there for a long time. When he was released, those who wanted to talk to him gave him money, but he said nothing, not a word. And his

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[12] Carnivorous animals are fat because they feed on each other

father had already joined [*zvigure*], so we say, *'patsika remberi ndipo panotevera rutsure'*[13]. So the child didn't go ahead with his education. He was doing grade six. Now his parents are struggling and saying: 'we wish our child had finished school, so he could help us with future problems'. So my friends, *'mukaka wadeuka hauchacererwe'* or *'yapinda hamwe haitsiwi'*[14]. Don't do what this child did or we will struggle and our parents will cry.

January Dzikema, aged 12: On Christmas Day there will be joy because people will be wearing new clothes, eating nice food and there will be different parties. And on our farm the whiteman will give everyone food.

Christmas is a festival which is always celebrated on the farms, and for a few days, people's problems are forgotten.

Anna Malunga, aged 11: Christmas Day is the happiest day of my life. There was traditional dance and we ate rice and meat.

Patume Masoche, aged 15: It was in 1997 in December ... I visited my parents in Chiweshe. I have left here on Thursday. When I reached there my mother had gone to the field. My father was at work. I was happy to see my mother coming and I hugged her. We walked to the house and we sat down; then my mother gave me sadza. When I was eating sadza my mother get into her bedroom and she came out with new clothes and shoes in her hands. She told me that they were for me. I was very happy. I took them out on the 25th of December, on Christmas Day. That day my sister who stay in Chinhoyi came when we were in the middle of celebrating Christmas. When I saw my sister, I welcomed her and took the things that she was carrying and put them in the house. I gave her some food and we started talking about life. My sister say to me 'What do you think I have brought for you?' I was happy before I was told what it was. She told me that she have brought me clothes. They were nice. We were together, the Masoche family, and we were happy dancing until sunset.

Batina Simon, aged 12: It was on Christmas Day when I was beaten by my mother because I hit the baby and it fell down. My mother caught me and started beating me. ... I tried to run away but she went to get a huge stick. She was beating me on the back and legs. Then I ran to my friend's home and I was crying. ... Her mother asked me what had happened. I told her everything and

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[13] You don't set a trap for an animal just because you saw it passing

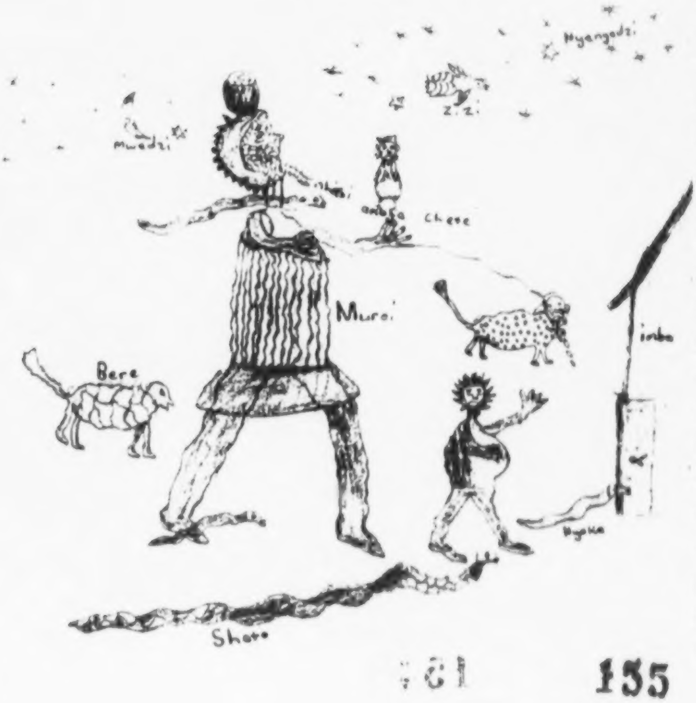
[14] There is no need to cry over spilt milk

she told me to go and ask for forgiveness. When I went back home I saw my mother washing the mud off the baby which it got when it fell down. I asked my mother to forgive me, and she said, 'Don't do it again'. I was very happy because I was celebrating Christmas nicely and I went to my friend's home and we went to church.

On some farms, the role of the traditional *n'anga* or healer is greatly valued.

Netsai, aged 11: My grandmother is a healer ... I help her look for traditional herbs ... I know the one which stops vomiting and the one for coughing. ... I started knowing them when I was eight years old. ... I sometimes help my grandmother ... I take a razor and cut the patient a little bit and put black medicine in. We get the medicines from the forest and burn them and then grind them. ... If I use one razor [on two people] they will get diseases like AIDS. I want to be a nurse when I grow up because nurses are kind.

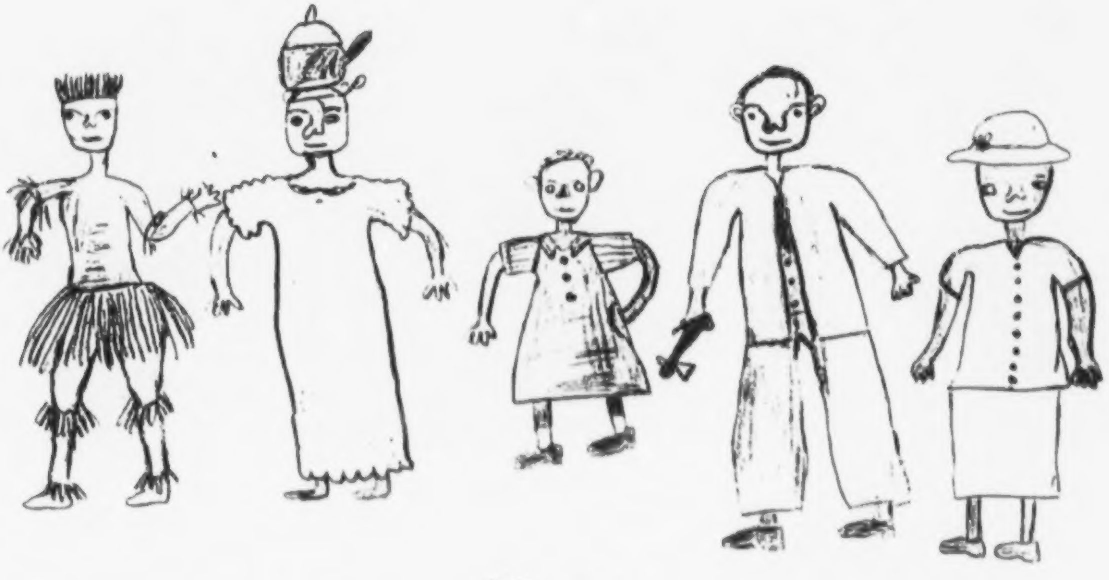
Watson Sabilika, aged 13: I used to stay with my grandmother in the rural areas. We used to have a two-roomed house and grass roofed. My grandmother knows traditional herbs to avoid witches. When it was dark we heard a knock at the door and we opened the door and saw no one. After some time the same thing happens again. But the other day, they came again at night. We heard a sound and suddenly a call: 'You don't have to come at your home at night, if you do you will die.' In the morning we heard that the witch had died. We don't know where they have visited last night.



Simbai Chaparira, aged 13: Our farm living conditions are not easy because of witches. {There] will be a death on every Christmas. People are trapping witches by placing a dish of water. Water which will be prayed [over] – that's what we do when someone has died because there are witches. People are getting sick and dying. Some people if they see that someone has bought a car or a television, they will leave you for a while until you have finished your course [in driving]. You will be looking forward to finish that year alive. If you do, then you will go to stay in rural areas. The reason

why you leave the farm is because of witches. They are the best witches on the farm. When I grow up, if I capture witches, I will cut them with an axe because they are killing people. If I trap them, I will cut them as wood because I will be shy to tell them that they are witches. Some are teaching their grandchildren [to be witches]. That's why I want to go and live in the rural areas because when I get sick I will stay at home. Some people are leaving their children without food while they will be eating other people's flesh at night. People are always sick each and every year because of witches. There are some women who were trapped whilst they were witching. There was a woman who was pregnant and her mother was a Christian. She was given water, which had been blessed. A witch came into the house and was captured. The women told them to take the witch to the committee.

Some traditions will inevitably fade away or change with the new generation of children who have been to school. And despite the perceived disparity of cultural practices, the different religious and traditional beliefs, and the different languages used within the farm villages, there is a strong sense of community, at least as reflected through the children.



Shiela

The wider world

We have to teach young children about the whole world.
Fungai Julius, aged 13

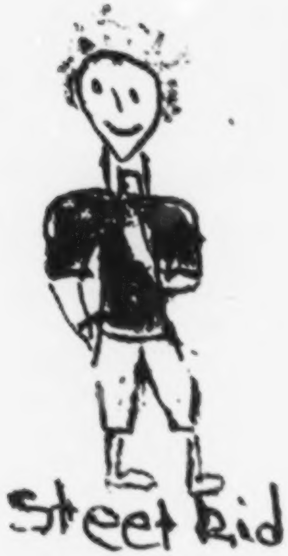
Sure, life in Harare, and what you get for free is sun only.
Prisca Dick, aged 12

As we have seen, many farm children undergo profound experiences of loss and deprivation, work, hardship and marriage at a very young age, and their lives are constrained by poverty and by geographical isolation. However, the wider world does encroach upon them to a greater or lesser extent. This depends on how far the farm is from a town, how near it is to a bus route, whether they go to school and for how long, whether they have access to a radio or a television, and how often they are visited by, or visit, relatives who live in towns or in the communal areas.

The voices in this chapter derive from a good, well-equipped school about sixty kilometres from Harare. What is revealing is how the nearest small town is perceived to be the hub of activity – a known place – at once familiar and exciting, whilst their concept of Harare is a much vaguer one, one informed by opinion rather than experience. Their views suggest their own fairly solid sense of right and wrong, their principles and beliefs. Harare, the capital city is not seen as a place that provides all kinds of delights and possibilities, but rather as a place of deprivation where people suffer and where nothing comes free.

Although a great deal more research needs to be done, these views were often reflected by children on many different farms who, despite their hardships, have no self-pity and do not always see themselves as being comparatively badly off.

The humour, freshness, wisdom and maturity of many of their comments, provide us with a positive sense of what farm children will, as adults, be able to contribute to society, as long as their views and opinions are taken into consideration, and as long as they are treated as equal members of society.



The combined ideas of one grade seven class.

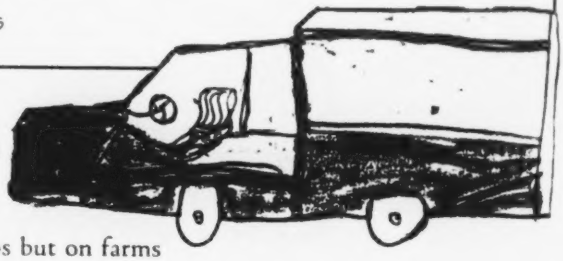
Neighbouring town
shops
post office
schools
cotton ginnery
clinics
beerhalls
houses
police camp
workshops
cars/buses
thieves

Harare
street kids
entertainment places
thieves
urban areas
robbers
orphans
squatters
refugees
unemployed people
overcrowding
dangers
prostitutes

Zimbabwe
a capital city
gold mines and minerals
peace
electricity
industrial areas
water
banks
factories
soldiers
schools
natural resources
people (black and white)
animals and game parks
transport
diseases
expensive things

Africa
countries (52)
aeroplanes
animals
shops
plants
guns and bullets
post offices
police offices
schools

Europe and America
guns and bullets
ships
deserts and seas
the Statue of Liberty
bombs
white people
musicians
explorers
trees
fuel



Memory Bulaundi, aged 12: Most people in the rural areas stay in grass-thatched huts, and shops and stores are not near.

January Dzikoma, aged 12: In the rural areas you grow your own crops but on farms you have to follow the farm owner's ideas.

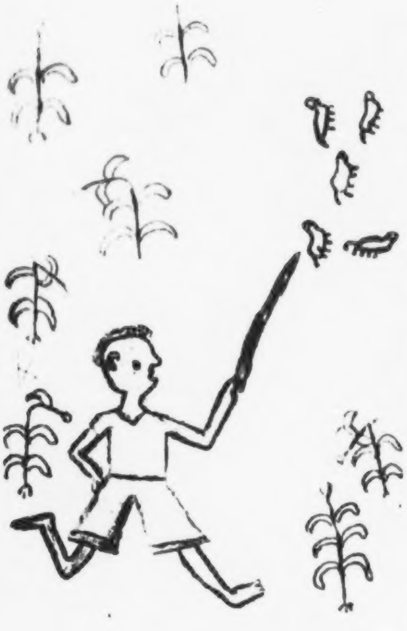
Anyway Chimbenga, aged 13: Rural life is easy because you can work for yourself and get money so that you can look after your family. ... You can grow cotton, tobacco, maize and vegetables and many other things. You can sell them and buy cattle that you can use for cultivation with your family. You can get milk and you won't have relish problems; you can sell milk and get money to buy your children clothes. When it is time for celebrating something, you can even kill one cow.

The rural areas

The attitude of farm children to the wider world, to the rural areas, towns and cities naturally depends on their own circumstances and experiences, their families and the farm or farms on which they have lived.

Francis Mapuranga, aged 14: I think rural life is good because you can do whatever you want without being forced. You can find a place to cultivate and when you are cultivating, there won't be a foreman. When you stay on a farm there won't be a place to keep livestock such as cattle or goats. In rural areas you won't find dogs in other people's homes, and you can find scotch carts, but here on farms, you don't. And there are those who grow cotton and they get their own money. In rural areas if you have money to buy sugar and money for grinding maize, you won't have to worry [about anything].

Pretty Ndambi, aged 13: Boys on the farm don't know a lot compared to those who come from communal areas. [They] knows a lot. Boys on the farm don't want to go to school. Boys at the farm start drinking beer when they are still very young. They enjoy playing football and playing traditional dance. They marry when they are still very young. Boys at the farm end up stealing. Boys from the communal areas first work for their parents before they decide to marry. [They] marry at twenty years going upwards. ... At this age ... they will be mature and have enough experience in farming. Boys from the communal areas know the time to plant their crops.



'Hunting for mice and hares.'

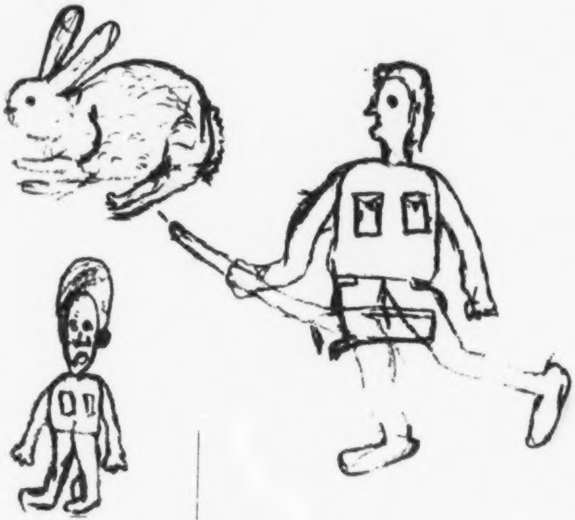
Rodwell Muroto, aged 17: I say rural life is good because the life is not hard as stone. You can grow maize and you can survive a whole year. ... You can do different things such as farming, looking after livestock, and sports such as soccer. Women will be making peanut butter, fathers and grandfathers will be making wooden spoons and hoe sticks. Grandchildren will be looking after livestock, and you will be hunting for mice and hares. You will not be working for someone and you will not be destroying your blood for nothing. People in rural areas work when they want to. *Kutauriria hunyimwa sembare dzokomusa*. (It is better to see for yourself than to be told.)

Shepherd Eddias, aged 12: When it comes to rural life, people solve their problems themselves. Others have helped when they don't have anything; they are given maize seed or maize to grind when they don't have anything.

Tapson Madzorera, aged 16: Rural areas are good but only this one [is not good] there are no toilets. ... And if cattle continues grazing at the same place the grass remains very small, and desert places are not good because they will be very hot.

Kudakwashe Mutasa aged 14: Rural life is hard because firewood is a problem and when your livestock have eaten someone's field, then you will pay. Food is also a problem. But rural areas are good because if you don't have one, when you are told that work is over, you won't have anywhere to go.

Danger Savery, aged 16: Living conditions on farms are not good. Everything you want, like vegetables, you have to pay for. Children don't respect their parents. Young girls rush into marriages. In the rural areas there is plenty of food and fields to be cultivated. Children respect their elders. There are more schools and education is free. There are boreholes which bring safe water. People always respect each other and you can work on your own without a foreman or a supervisor. Young girls have good habits because they are taught by their grandmothers. There is more happiness in the rural areas because if you play your radio on the farm they will say you are making a noise.



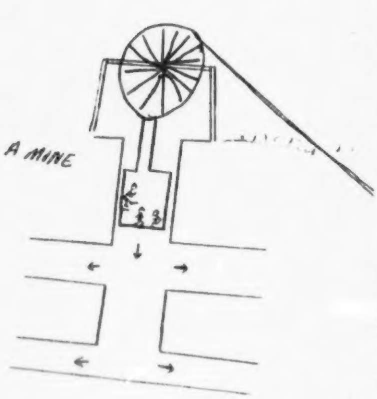
Jephias Makaya, aged 16: I am a very good hunter and well-known in the Masvingo region. I used to hunt on Sunday afternoons ... we did it but it wasn't allowed. We used to hunt for animals such as antelopes, hares and wild pigs. The wild pigs were difficult so we used a gun; it was known that we were using a gun ... and we were arrested and taken to the nearest police station. We were found guilty of killing animals which wasn't allowed. We were told to pay a fine.

The mines

Mathias Malawi, aged 14: Life on the mines is good when you are working nicely. It is bad when it comes to accidents and many other things. When you die, mine children will be left struggling and not having anyone to send them to school.

Micah Mangatai, aged 14: Working in mines is dangerous because mines are dark.

Pinas Kalumo, aged 14: ... People who work on mines come back home when others are asleep and the people who work on the mines work harder than on the farms. ... And you can wake up in the morning with your mouth on your cheek ... because there are witches in the mines. There are no witches on the farms.



Gift Mareko, aged 17: Mine life is very good because you will get a lot of money, especially if you are lucky and working at a gold, coal, copper or silver mine. But on farms, when you are not working, many games are played. ... But when we compare the farm we see that there are many things found at mines, and they are precious; and at the mines, houses have electricity and many rooms, and many people live in them.

Norman Mudonhi, aged 15: Life at the farm is different from those who stay in town. Children who stay in town have parents who work. Some of the children on farms stay with their grandmothers and aunties. They end up not going to school. I am different from others because I go to school. ... I stay with my mother. She divorced my father. The difference is that people from town earn a lot. People who work in farms are paid very little. People cannot afford to buy anything. People who stay in town can pay fees for their children. They can also afford to pay for water and electricity. Here on the farms we can go to school without school uniform and food to eat. Those who stay in town go to school well-dressed, with their tummies full.

Towns and cities

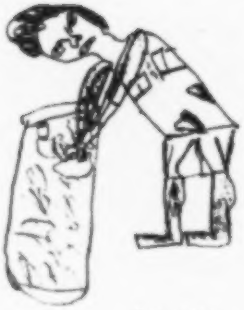
Prisca Dick, aged 12: Life in Harare is harder than farm life because, in town, things such as firewood and water are expensive. People who rent are the ones who are struggling, they pay money for water, housing, electricity and firewood. They also need clothes and blankets. Farm life is better because when things get expensive you can harvest maize, weed the whiteman's field and pick cotton [to earn money] and even money which is paid for school fees is few. Sure, life in Harare, and what you get for free is sun only.

Esnathy Goto, aged 15: Let me tell you about life in Harare and on farms ... When I went to Harare in 1993, that is when I saw that life is hard [there]. I saw another woman crying because of not having enough food [although] both men and women are working. That's when I knew that life in Harare is useless because there isn't anything you get for free [not like] life on farms

Justin Mangameko, aged 14: It is better to stay in cities because you get everything you want. And if you want to buy something [you don't have to] walk a long way to the shops.

Givemore Mutisi, aged 16: Life in Harare is hard because everything you need you have to buy ... I have seen thieves as ants. Some people will be eating food from the bins.

There was another man who ran after a car so that when it stops, he will be given money to look after it until the owner comes back ... I thought that maybe what they are called in English is 'street kids'. I didn't know robots until I went to Harare. They will be in three colours: red, green and yellow, and when you will be walking, you will have to follow the changing robots. That's when I knew that life in Harare was hard.



Street kid.

Grace Njanji, aged 13: In towns you wear nice clean clothes. On the farms some won't comb their hair and they wear dirty clothes.

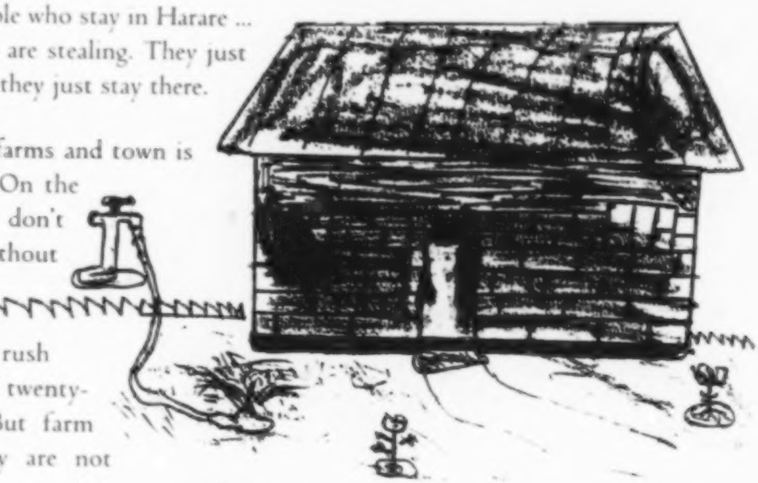
Karuzhina Banda, aged 17: ... on the farm you get a place to grow vegetables and other things. In towns everything needs money ... also money for transport when fathers are going to work, and children need school fees. That's when you see children ending up as street kids. They will be dumped by parents and they may run away from home because of hunger, and maybe they will be abused by parents and that's when they run away, eating food from bins. It is better here on the farm because you can work for yourself.

Tapiwa Chakoma, aged 18: In towns others are seeing fire because of hunger. Food is not easy to get in towns; we on the farms are having plenty of food. Some mothers are dumping their children because of hunger. Others are following the road, and if we say 'following the road' we mean prostituting, ... this is making others to survive in towns. It is because of hunger.

Maria Chemonera, aged 17: The life is hard for people who stay in Harare ... the ones who don't have food are the ones who are stealing. They just stay in plastic-made houses and don't even care; they just stay there.

Blessed Chipere, aged 11: The difference between farms and town is that on farms children get married too early. On the farms children are not self-controlled and they don't have manners. But in Harare you get nothing without money. On the farms you grow your own crops.

Luxmore Sakara, aged 12: Children in towns don't rush for marriages. They get married at the age of twenty-five. They are also smart and they listen. But farm children are not self-controlled because they are not



disciplined by their parents. But people who live in towns have to be rich, because if you are poor, you will find life hard. It is better to stay on the farms because you will be working, and you will get money. And when you have grown maize, you don't buy mealie-meal.

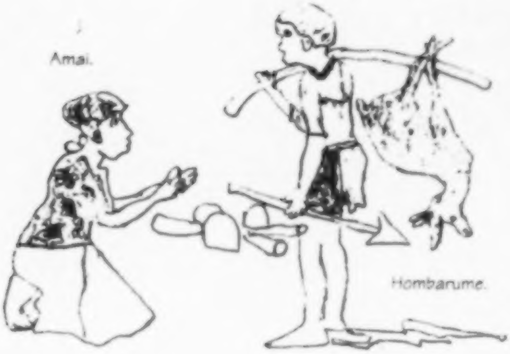
Fanuel Chisare, aged 16: Farm life and city life is very different ... but life in towns is enjoyable because different games are played.

Shepherd Eddias, aged 12: On the farm things are done for you by the whiteman; you just buy mealie-meal and soap and other things [and on] other farms these are given too.

Tayson Gin Tayero, aged 16: People on the farms survive a good life. If they work nicely nothing will disturb them. When going to work, they will be given transport. The whitemen are kind to their workers. They are given maize-meal, maize and firewood for free. After the whiteman has harvested, people will go again to the fields to find what is left. Many people in the city don't survive a good life because of not having food and water ... people are selling things so they can survive, others end up breaking into stores and murdering because of not having enough food. Others who are rich, don't give rides in their cars to people who are poor.

Agnes Goman, aged 15: What I found hard in the city is to spend the whole day looking for a job and not finding it. ... there are plenty of jobs on farms. Children who don't have anyone to look after them can work for themselves and not picking food in bins.

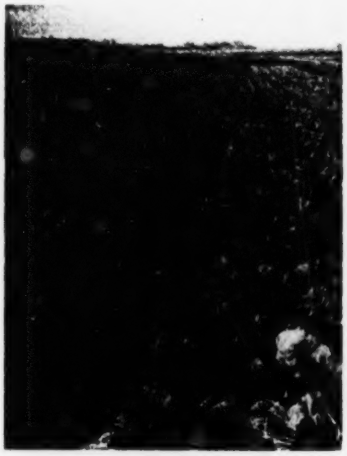
Caroline Mukumbareza, aged 13: On the farms, we can work during school holidays. In towns, jobs are not easily found.



Juliet Kariwo, aged 14: The difference between farm life and city life is there are many different things in the cities and there are also different rules given by government. But farm life is good because you tell the whiteman your problems and they can help you. In cities others are sleeping without food. Life in the cities is now harder than the farms.

Joyce Katsarapfuwa, aged 18: I have stayed in the city and that's when I saw that there's a big difference between farms and cities ... Farm

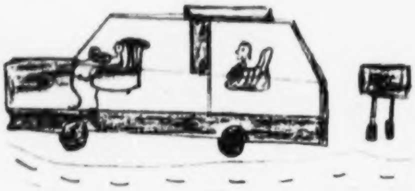
people's living conditions are better than those in cities. [There] you see boys and girls having sex because their parents wouldn't have money to pay rent because nothing is for free. Accidents never stop ... when I grow up, I don't want to stay in a city because city life depends on begging.



Stella Mapurira, aged 15: The advantages of town life are that all children go to school; no matter how expensive, they will just go. And people in towns earn better salaries than those on farms. And people in towns don't work as hard as people on farms.

Trust Bernard, aged 14: Our houses have electricity but when this is gone we can use firewood, or we can use a paraffin stove, and we don't pay rent. On Christmas day we are given meat, beer and a lot of money. We are given a tractor and we go to buy clothes, food and furniture. We can fish, and we are also given oranges. After harvesting the whiteman's field for wheat, soya beans and maize, we can go and take what we want. If someone gets hurt at work they will be given money according to the injury. We don't buy water, but in cities they pay for water, firewood and houses. There are many thieves in the cities and they have to have security to look after their houses.

Ezekia Makata, aged 13: The advantages for our farm life and customs are that we don't buy firewood, our schools are cheaper than those in the cities, we don't buy water, but in cities they have to buy water. Our *murungu* gives us tractors for carrying people to the fields and for cultivating. If someone dies on the farm, he supplies the wood for the coffin, but in cities they have to buy them. There, they also have to pay to watch dramas, but here we don't, we make our own. In cities, there is no place for cultivation, but we can cultivate crops and we grow fruits. Here on the farm, if the electricity is gone, we go to cut firewood in the forests. People in cities have to pay to watch games and bands and *zvigure*, but we don't pay. If someone in the cities gets sick, they have to pay to go to hospital, but we don't pay for transport, the whiteman takes us to the clinic. And if a grade seven passes his exams, the *murungu* will pay for him to go to secondary school, and the whiteman buys books for the school, but in the cities you have to buy them yourself. In cities they buy rats to eat, but here we go and dig them from the fields. In towns they eat bread, but they don't know how it is grown. In cities if you kill a wild animal, you will be arrested but here you are allowed to hunt.



Who they are

Children who participated in the research

(Names appear as the children wrote them.)

Aaron, Batsirai
Aaron, Naison
Abeck, Lydia
Abednigo, Masimba
Abinarah, Wisborn
Advance
Akison, Venetia
Albert, Ketai
Ali, Emily
Ali, Sau
Alick, Norbert
Alick, Shumirai
Alima, Amisi
Alufayi, Samson
Amisi, Sipha
Amon, Shanai
Andrew
Anjero, Stanley
Baciliea, Vengai
Banda, Jealous
Banda, Karuzhina
Banda, Knowledge
Banda, Sepu
Banda, Stanley
Banda, Takesure
Banda, Tavengwa
Banda, Vengai
Bandawe, Chataweye
Bandawe, Owen
Bandera, Nvepu
Bandura, Anna
Barisa, Gilbert
Bassilia, Recha
Ben, Moffat
Benard, Revai
Benard, Trust
Beni, Lovemore
Benias
Benjamin, Benjamin
Bennett, Tinashe
Bernard, Thom
Bhauti, Marleen
Bhomusi, Methias
Bion, Netsai
Bisent, Pedzisai
Bisent, Wiseman
Bito, Guih
Boidho, Dhausi
Brown, Doben
Bulaundi, Memory
Bvumba, Samson
Bvumbu, Hamunyare
Canada, Lydia
Chabatamoto, Rebecca
Chabindira, Sendirani
Chabooka, Elliot
Chaburuka, Trust
Chadzemba, Helen
Chadzuma, Ben
Chadzuma, Jameson
Chagona, Chipo
Chagumaira, Fanuel
Chaitezvi, Knowledge
Chakanyuka, Mashoko
Chakoma, Tapiwa
Chamada, Max
Chambukiro, Tarisai
Chambuluka, Virimai
Chamunorwa, Edias
Chanza, Charles
Chaparira, Rudo
Chaparira, Simbai
Charamba, Memory
Chareka, Classmore
Chareka, Daisy
Chareka, Master
Chari, Tonderai
Charity
Charles, Agnes
Chasokara, Sailas
Chataza, Tonias
Chatema, Saidi
Chatyoka, Memory
Chazika, Bernard
Cheidi, Cheruwa
Chemonera, Maria

Chemukunga, Beular
Chengu, Kelvin
Chianhwa, Brian
Chida, Shupikai
Chidambo, Sekai
Chiduga, Mark
Chidhuna, Isaac
Chidima, Betina
Chidonga, Febbie
Chidongo, Harrison
Chidongo, Naume
Chidure, Zivanai
Chidzenga, Judith
Chidzomba, Norest
Chidzomba, Tichaona
Chiedi, Jackson
Chieri, Shelton
Chieri, Takawira
Chifinihwa, Brian
Chifumuro, Tapera
Chigwedere, Fungai
Chihuri, Bridget
Chihuri, Langton
Chikukulo, Shushai
Chikuni, Darlington
Chimarizani, Munvaradzi
Chimarizeni, Muchadura
Chimbenga, Anyway
Chimombe, Pauline
Chimunda, Zhuwanu
Chimupini, Alfred
Chimurara, Winnet
Chimuriwo, Tinei
Chimusau, Patience
Chimusau, Susan
Chinai, Annah
Chindiyaufa, Tichaona
Chipala, Sirgu

Chipendo George
Chipendo, Nobody
Chipere, Blessed
Chipfunde, Gracious
Chipika, Shaine
Chipingisa, Venecia
Chipo
Chirenje, Sharon
Chirongo, Nelia
Chirwa, Owen
Chisamupeni, Paidamoyo
Chisare, Anyway
Chisare, Fanuel
Chisare, Smart
Chison, Aleck
Chitseko, Muzondiwa
Chitsinde, Catherine
Chitsungo, Wonder
Chitsuro, Cry
Chiutika, Tamare
Chiwanza, Fungai
Chiwanza, Miriam
Chiwoyo, Zorodzai
Chiyera, Shelter
Chizona, Tyren
Choga, Majaira
Choga, Ngara
Chokufora, Evelyn
Churu, Zondai
Clean, Dadirai
Cloud, John
Coffee, Tafadzwa
Coffee, Fadzinai
Coffee, Fanuel
Coffee, Wilson
Company, Macdonald
Corfatt, Leonard
Cosamu, Lameck

Coster, Aaron
Daiton, Prisca
Dambadzai, Mathew
Dangarambidzi, Cherish
Danger, Savery
Danny, Ester
Dean, Dodirai
Deniss, Garikai
Depa
Dhamiyawo, Edmore
Dhauka, Tichaona
Dick, Prisca
Dimingu, Luxmore
Dinjas, Edmore
Dodzo, Rufaro
Dombo, Hellen
Domigo, Aswell
Dumba, Purity
Dzikoma, January
Dzinamareka, Simba
Dzudza, Watson
Eddias, Shepherd
Edison, Coin
Edmore
Edward, Nomatter

Edward, William
Elijah, Freddy
Emeriya, Bernard
Emily
Enoch, Itai
Enwas, Enwas
Everisto, Panganai
Ezekria
Faindani, Josephine
Faindani, Patience
Fanuel
Farai
Farnolick, Govema
February, Zacharia
Fernando, Justice
Fernando, Zhaime
Florence
Fodani, Precious
Fokolani, Tsvagai
Fondani, Dudzai
Fondani, Patience
Fonzo, William
Fortunate, William
Fortune
Foyah, Tumai

Framba, Shamisai
Francis, Keresiya
Frank, Dadirai
Funuel, Tichinayo
Gamba, Nhamo
Gamba, Shumirai
Gandare, Hazvinei
Garai, Bigboy
Gatsi, Julliett
Gavhiyawo, Tafadzwa
Gaviao, Steven
Gedion, Catherine
George, Fortunate
Gertrude
Gibbon, Chenjerai
Gibson, Tarisai
Gilbert, Fungai
Ginger, Endrew
Give, Tichaona
Give, Zondai
Goba, Tafadzwa
Godfrey, Shaudhai
Golden
Gomani, Agnes
Gomani, Grace
Gomba, Shamisa
Gombarashama, Vincent
Gomo, Patience
Gonani, Ireen
Gore, Clara
Goto, Esnathy
Govera, Shame
Gudo, Chiedza
Gukwe, Steven
Gurure, Fungai
Guta, Dadirai
Guyson, Fortunate
Gwevera, Shamai
Gwisira, Tinashe
Hama, Erik
Hamadziripi, Fletcher
Hamadziripi, Friedrich
Harandure, Tendai
Harry, Paida
Herepani, Stanley
Honda, Xavier
Innocent
Ireen
Isa, Joel
Isaac, Chipo
Isaac, Magaso
Isaac, Vhaidha
Ismael, Sainabu
Ismail, Iajabu
Isumael
Jack, Margret
Jack, Veronica
Jackson, Tawanda
Jacob, Maidei
Jairos, Orippah
Jairosi, Pamela
Jambo, Kudakwashe
James, Loveness
James, Tinashe
James, Violet
Jameson, Greti
Jambu, Dadirai
Jamu, Yvonne
Jengo, Fungisai
Jeremiah, Morris
Jeremiah, Stefia
Jiri, Eusinah
Jiri, Linah
Johanis, Taurai
John, Patience
John, Cloudy More
John, Dareck
John, Edhai
John, Rumbidzai
John, Taisi
Jomo, Dambudzo
Joramu, Hazvinei
Josamu, Doesmatter
Josamu, Mike
Josiya, Susan
Julius, Barbra
Julius, Fungai
Julius, Langton
Julius, Loveness
Julius, Matinetsa
July, Nzira
Junior
Jutiyasi, Robart,
Kabudura, Dickson
Kachidza, Brian
Kachigamba, Juliet
Kachimera, Chakanetsa
Kadzomba, Florence
Kaenje, Anna
Kafudza, Edson
Kahoka, Obert
Kajawa, Maria
Kalumo, Pinos
Kambakuku, Mutizwa
Kambanje, Marufu
Kambanje, Petros
Kambanje, Robert
Kambezo, Edith
Kamburukira, Clifford
Kamburukira, Durai
Kameso, Calvin
Kamsanja, Maria
Kamudoriro, Tatendo
Kamumvukutu, Nomatter
Kamundi, Rose
Kamupira, Muchaneta
Kanengoni, Jane
Kanengoni, Margret
Kangoma, Frank
Kaniyawo, Smart
Kanyemba, Cloud
Kanyonganise, Dzonga
Kapangura, Tafadzwa
Kapare, Owen
Kapenula, Lina
Kapomba, Rambisai
Kapsa, Taizvei
Karandura, Vengai
Karingo, Ivy
Kariwo, Juliet
Kasepa, Nomatter
Kasepa, Takawira
Kasepam, Everjoy
Kaina, Christina

Kavvata, Oliver
Katandika,Wander
Katiki, Chakanetsa
Katsarapfuwa, Joyce
Katsarapfuwa, Shepherd
Kaunda, Francis
Kavhu, Fraction
Kavhu, Innocent
Kazhembe, Kalembeni
Kazodo, Eve
Kefasi, Norpu
Kefasi, Panhisai
Kenias, Esther
Ketani, Fungai
Kingstone, Shepherd
Kiri, Brenda
Kiutia, Tafadzwa
Knowledge
Kofi, Noah
Kogambot, Edgar
Kogoombe, Edzai
Kondoore, Edward
Kotswani, Bigboy
Kotswani, Munyaradzi

Kowo, Memory
Kudangirana, Chenai
Kudano, Boydon
Kudzara, Gerald
Kukada, Chiedi
Kumbukani, Luckmore
Kurasa, Chakadza
Kushinga, Chorwadza
Kusukwemu, Clemense
Kutinyu, Sarudzai
Kuwandika, Kevin
Kuzamba, Knowledge
Kwenda, Muchaneta
Laison, Sandy
Lakson, Freddy
Langton, Chakanetsa
Letesi, Tendai
Lewis, Mary
Light, Colleen
Lili, Mike
Lizzynet
Lloyd
Lloyd (2)
Lloyd, Nyamahanda

Locadia
Love, Abigail
Love, Bhibi
Love, Tafadzwa
Love, Wadzinai
Lucas, Loice
Luis, Mafaiti
Macheso, Godfrey
Macheso, Tichaona
Madewa, Sibongile
Madeya, Memory
Madeya, Normen
Madiro, Oscar
Madya, Vengai
Madzira, Edson
Madzonganyika, Siwanziyo
Madzorera, Tapson
Mafaranjara, Naume
Magaba, Mathias
Magaso, Abisher
Magaso, Isaac
Magaso, Netsai
Magwaza, Makomborero
Maidei, Mike
Makanyara, Jeffrey
Makasa, Patichai
Makaya, Jephias
Makina, Costar
Makina, Dzikimau
Makion, Wonder
Makiyi, Ruvimbo
Makiyi, Rutendo
Makombe, Plaxedes
Makore, Fortunate
Makuma, Ishmael
Makwasa, Anderson
Makwera, Edina
Makwinja, Ruth

Malau, George
Malawi, Mathias
Malili, Mildred
Mandera, Eunice
Mandoro, Apronia
Mangasau, Gilbert
Mangatai, Micah
Mangomeka, Justin
Mangurenje, Fortunate
Manyarirwa, Thompson
Maodzwa, Hamundide
Mapfuriro, Shepherd
Maphosa, Blessing
Maplan, Bhamusi
Maposa, Rwisai
Maposa, Simon
Mapuranga, Francis
Mapurira, Sheila
Mareko, Gift
Marico, Brighton
Mariko, Martha
Marimo, Eunice
Maringu, Enos
Marisa, Tatenda
Mariya, Vengai
Marizani, Portia
Marizani, Tavengwa
Maronje, Caroline
Marten, Isaac
Marufu
Maruza, Christine
Maruza, Fanwork
Maseche, Patuma
Masekesa, Makanyara
Masekesa, Melania
Maseti, Kwawena
Mashanga, Beatrice
Mashanga, Owen

Mashapure, Lovemore
Masiya, Kudakwashe
Masunga, Tinashe
Matanda, Oscar
Matanhure, Respect
Matanhure, Tirivei
Mateu, George
Mateyo, Brighton
Mathewson, Safeguy
Matipano, Talent
Matope, Brightest
Matumbe, Pomerai
Matzinhure, Bigson
Maumbo, Lamusi
Maunde, Abdulla
Mausunga, Nill
Mavhura, Artwell
Mavhura, Farewell
Mavhura, Zondai
Maxan, Clever
Maxwell, Bonnie
Maxwell, Edzai
Mbofana, Gibson
Mbofana, Robson
Melice
Memory
Mendo, Alice
Mhuru, Tarisai
Mica, Mangati
Michael, Shorai,
Mickson, Stawati
Mike, Misheck
Minato, Bhibhiyo
Minato, Tendai
Mirrion, Forget
Misheck, Joyce
Mishek, Hilda
Mishek, Sixpence
Mkata, Ezekia
Mlambo, Nyasha
Mlambo, Owen
Mlambo, Tracy
Mocha, Never
Modester, Maseti
Moffat, Ben
Moffat, Doctor
Moffat, Givemore
Moffat,, Makanyara
Moffat, Tafadzwa
Motokari, Raymond
Mountain, Fryton
Moyo, Foster
Mpasu, Ruramai
Mpemba, Musekelani
Mu'na'na, Brighton
Mubaira, Cuthbert
Mubaira, Terence
Mucheki, Panganai
Mucheki, Shepherd
Muchenje, Primrose
Muchero, Ernest
Mudonhi, Norman
Mufandaedza, Washington
Mufarira, Virginia
Mufariri, Stella
Mufuka, George
Muganhu, Ireen
Mujaji, Michael
Mukadzambo, Hardlife
Mukadzambo, Hazvinei
Mukata, Lawrence
Mukato, Dennis
Mukato, Eneres
Mukombwe, Tafadzwa
Mukonzo, Takaedza
Mukumbareza, Caroline
Mukwanisa, Samba
Mulauzi, Peter
Mulauzi, Sailas
Mulemede, Catherine
Munangatire, Funny
Mundowani,Ndiuzani
Muneri, Falisters
Munetsi, Collin
Mungasau, Nomore
Muniana, Brighton
Munjayi, Tsitsi
Munyambari, Theodorah
Munyaradzi
Muoni, Mary
Mupambuza, Alice
Mupambuza, Ingidzai
Mupemba, Mekerina
Mupesa, Angela
Mupeudzi, Charles
Mupfudzi, Norman
Mupisa, Angela
Mupita, Advance
Muringazuna, Pingidzai
Murini, Hamunyu,
Muromba, Beauty
Muromba, Tonderai
Murota, Rodwell
Murota, Ruth
Musa, Musa
Musarifa, Sipelile
Mushonga, Blantina
Mushonga, Tichaona
Musinjo, Simbai
Musiyambodza, Beauty
Musomva, Edith
Musona, Albert
Mustafa, Godfree
Mutandayai, Unity
Mutape, Munyaradzi
Mutasa, Cuthbert
Mutasa, Kudakwashe
Mutatapasi, Tinotenda
Mutekesa, Kenias
Mutenga, Agnes
Mutesva, Sipiwe
Mutika, Karen
Mutisi, Givemore
Mutize, Rosemary
Mutopo, Tichaona
Mutsikamahwe, Maria
Mutsvangwa, Onias
Muveringhi, Emerson
Muza, Blessing
Mvindo, Edwin
Mvindo, Right
Mvundura, Christine

Mwale, Garikai
Mwale, Marcelin
Mwale, Maxwell
Mwale, Paul
Mwezhurukau, Benias
Naison, Solomon
Ndaizivei
Ndeketenga, Never
Ndodo, Pauline
Ndombi, Pretty
Nebart
Nehumba, Nomsa
Netsai, Nyadzavo
Ngirazi, Esther
Ngondonga, Zivanai
Ngonid, Zashe Zonda
Ngulube, Richard
Ngwenya, Trevor
Nhamo Ngirazi
Nhamoinesu, Emeline
Njanji, Grace,
Njanji, Kudakwashe
Njedza, Green
Nokaro, Shame
Noon, Keven
Norbert
Nota, Constance
Nota, Dure
Nota, Musa
Nota, Tsungarirai
Notice, Fungisai
Notice, Tichaona
Nyadoro, Gracious
Nyakausengwa, Tawanda
Nyakubande, Brenda
Nyakunda, Tafadzwa
Nyamhanza, Givemore
Nyamhanza, Vengas

Nyamurusa, Catherine
Nyandoro, Castern
Nyanga, Caroline
Nyarai, Judith
Nyarai, Kamusochi
Nyaruvinga, Christopher
Nyongo, Knowledge
Nzikora, James
Oliver
Packet, Justin
Paka, Fides
Pakati, Lloyd
Paniso, Partipher
Paraffin, Tapiwa
Parimanowanana, Frank
Parimwa, Agnes
Patrick, Kudakwashe
Pearson, Rhoda
Peter, Brian
Petros, Friday
Petros, Sarah
Peuka, Gift
Phanuel, Tichinayo
Philemon, Doctor
Phillip, Richmore
Phineas, Funny
Phineas, Whisky
Phiri, Julius
Phiri, Nomatter
Phiri, Shadreck
Phiri, Steven
Phiri, William
Piano, Terence
Piano, Tsitsi
Pocket, Justin
Potagomo Tsitsi
Poterai, Tafadzwa
Pungarume, Manyara

Rangarirai
Ranjisi, Fungai
Ranjisi, Mark
Rashid, Morris
Reza, Paradzai
Robert
Robson, Clever
Robson, Lizzinet
Robson, Lizzy
Robson, Zivai
Ronica
Rufaso, Star
Ruwa, Mwada
Ruwa, Levison
Ruwizhu, Kennedy
Ruwizi, Zondai
Sabilika, Watson
Saidi
Saidi, Ephraim
Saidi, Sandy
Sakara, Luxmore
Saki, Trymore
Salali, Margaret
Samby, Stanford
Samson, Nelia
Samuel, Taurai
Samuel, Winnie
Sande, Faith
Sande, Kudakwashe
Sande, Otavio
Sanudi, Trymore
Saukani, Miriam
Savery, Danger
Sesa, Martha
Shadreck, Alexander
Shadreck, Ipidzai
Shaine, C.
Shakufa, Maidei

Shamu, Brighton
Shamva, Partson
Shuvha, Sheilla
Sibanda, Wellington
Sigauke, Moreblessing
Sikero, Tadias
Simbarashe
Simon, Betina
Simon, Irene
Simon, Selina
Simon, Simon
Sipiriano, Steria
Sitas
Sithole, John
Sixpence, Gift
Siyakuria, Takadei
Siyanganga, Ellen,
Siyangongo, Esley
Size, Matsautso
Skymore
Smart, Adam
Smoko, Peter
Soko, Arinesi
Solomon, Cephas
Spencer, Takaruza
Steven, Saul
Straitherd, Zondai

Tabura, Mica
Tackson, Zarimba
Taderera, Nyasha
Taitosi, Ocean
Takadi, Steptis
Takeplan
Takesure, Emma
Tanaziyo, Emilia
Tapera
Tapera, Tavanga
Tapererwa, Lawrence
Tapfumanei, Jesca
Tarapiyawo, Pauline
Tarisai
Taroko, Tatenda
Tateyo, Stanislus
Taundi, Takesure
Tayero Gin, Tyson
Tayero, Passmore
Tembo, Edmore
Tembo, Martin
Tembo, Sekai
Tenani, More
Tendai
Thom
Thomas, Smart
Thompson, Mary
Tiki, Dickson
Tirigu, Christpen
Tirigu, Farai
Tirigu, Taitus
Tirungu, Taitus
Tizora, Aaron.
Tobias, Chipo
Tobias, Lebby
Tom, Kudakwasha
Tore, Alfred
Trezhu, Mandi

Trust
Tsambarikagwa, Gift
Tsoka, Rambidzai
Tsoko, Muchaneta
Tuesday, Allister
Tuwanje, Trymore
Undi, Manyara
Vahsko, Shamis
Vambe, Denny
Varent, Fantisen
Vherenizho, Kudzai
Vhikita, Taurai
Vhingazi, Nyarai
Victor, Abigail
Vinge, Everson
Vinge, Tongogara
Vinge, Zondai
Vinge, Zondani
Viola, Shaudhai
Viola, Stanley
Wadzanai
Walasi, Angeline
Wankie, Misheck
Waraza, Sepiwe
Wasi, Loreen
Watch, Adam
Watch, Eliah
Watch, Gift
Watson, Tapiwa
Wellington, Memory
White, Luke
Willard, Willard
William, Josphat
Williams, Shylet
Wilson, Paradzai
Wingironi, Nopmatter
Winnet, Tobas
Winnie

Wise, Sando
Yeukai, Jimmy
Yobe, Taurai
Zaidi, Amisi
Zakeyo, Chengetai
Zanamwe, Talent
Zeka, Vhadhusha
Zenda, Ngondishande
Zhanota, Egnes
Zhoya, Jane
Zhuwaki, Douglas
Zhuwao, James
Zhuwawo, Mino
Zimbiri, Enerst
Zingani, Lazarus

Zingani, Paida
Zingani, Zivinai
Ziso, Omen
Ziyaye, Medecine
Zulu, Bechani
Zulu, Givemore
Zulu, Wittness
Zuze, Daniel
Zuze, Eneress
Zuze, Phillipa
Zuze, Richmore
Zuze, Sarah
Zuze, Tinashe
Zvitwei, Smart
Zvomarima, Criana

Where they live

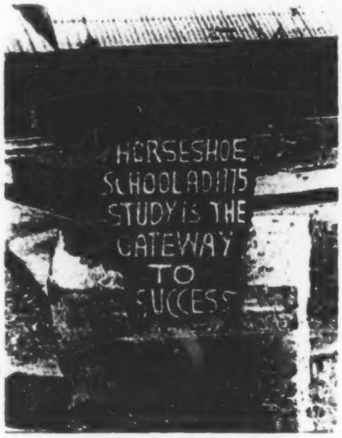
The children who participated in the project came from the following farms:

Amelroy Farm
Ardura Farm
Arnsellig Farm
Art Farm
Ashcott Farm
Banwell Farm
Bell Rock Farm
Bround Farm
Butleigh Farm
Camsasa Farm
Chaddesley Farm
Chadwick Farm
Chance Farm
Chemutamba Farm
Chigumira Farm
Chikoa Farm
Chipadze Farm
Chiparta Farm
Chirobi Farm
Chitamba Farm
Chivumbi Farm
Cowley Farm
Craigengower Farm
Davaar Farm
Dunkirk Farm
Dunkerry Farm
Eskbank Farm
Foothills Road Farm
Fox Farm
Frinton Farm
Granta Farm
Gurungwe Farm
Heyshott Farm
Horsehoe Farm
Jester Farm
Kamote Farm
Karoi Farm
Kia-ora Farm
Kilmer Farm
Komani Estates
Kuvinha Farm
Longcroft Farm
Magondo Farm
Marira Mbada
Marlborough Farm
Moorfields Farm
Mountain Home Farm
Msorodon Farm
Mukoko Farm
Norwi Farm
Nyadevi Farm
Nyandirwi Farm
Nyawata Farm
Oldbury Farm
Plymouth Farm
Rula Falls Farm
Sachel Farm
Seed power Farm
Simapiri Farm
Tara Farm
Tenanogo Farm
Tengenenge Farm
Tiaseka Farm
Tiaseka Farm
Tsaase Farm
Umanga North Farm
University Farm
Villa Franca Farm
Wooler Farm
Whytecliff Farm

Where they go to school

The schools which participated in the project

Ashcott Farm School
Chaddesley Farm School
Chadwick Farm pre-school
Chipadze Farm School
Chiparta Farm School
Cowlie Farm pre-school
Craigengower Farm School
Eskbank School
Foothills Road School
Heyshott School
Horseshoe School
Jester School
Nyadevi Farm School
Mountain Home Farm School
Whitecliff Farm pre-school



Who the teachers are

The teachers who participated in the project (The initials HM indicate

Mr Kessinal Banda (HM)
Mr K. Bwasira
Mr Cassian Cheguret (HM)
Miss Gaudencia Chikuni
Mrs Rosemary Chimombe
Mr Raphael Chinyani (HM)
Mr N. Chipadza
Mr Daniel Chisuvi (HM)
Mrs Rachael Dickson
Mr Isaac Dodzo (HM)
Mr Gomani Fanuel
Mr T. Gorejena
Miss S. Gwitira
Mr John Jamu
Miss Phidelis Josiah
Mr Leonard Kamutaru,
Mr Oswald Kanenungo (HM)
Mr E. Karonde
Mrs Florence Kaseke
Mr G. Katekwe
Mr Peter Kusikwenyu
Mr S. Kutamu
Miss L. Mangondoza
Mr Shingiria Mapfiro
Miss Daisy Mapondera
Mr Annias Marozva
Mrs S. Mataranyika
Mrs Pauline Matsena
Mr N. Mubvumba
Mr Solomon Mudzamiri
Mr Adam Mugnazo
Mr Samie Mukarati
Mr K. Mupona
Mrs Murinda
Mr C. Murongazyombo,
Mr Zepheniah Musanhu (HM)
Mr G. Mutatapasi
Mr Mutizwa
Mr Innocent Mutsatsati
Mr N. Muvhami
Mr S.M. Muza (HM)
Mr Musiiwa Muzika (HM)
Mai Ena Namboya
Mr L. Ngwenya (HM)
Mr Abel Nyakabande
Mr G. Nyamazinga
Mai Alice Njerenjere
Mr Kelvin Nyakumayo
Mai Lucia Petros
Mai Olivia Townde
Mr Gibson Tembo
Mr J. Sandaramu
Mr J. Zaza

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Save the Children (UK)

Save the Children Fund (UK) was founded in 1919 by Eglantyne Jebb whose vision was to put children first, regardless of nationality, race or creed. In 1924 the Declaration of Children's Rights was adopted by the League of Nations. In 1989 it was enshrined in international law as the cornerstone of the UN's Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

Over the past 75 years SCF (UK) has developed into a leading international children's charity. It relies for its income on donations and fundraising. It also receives contributions for particular projects from the UK government, the European Union and the UN. SCF (UK) is a part of the Save the Children Alliance, an association of independent national member organizations around the world.

Save the Children Fund (UK) aims:

- to develop a programme of practical action to place children's rights, needs, interests and views at the centre of development across the world.
- to combat the damage caused by policies and actions which threaten their survival and development.
- to respond to the situation of children in emergencies in ways that put their immediate needs in the context of their longer term interests and development.
- to encourage recognition of children's active contribution to the ties and societies in which they live.
- to support families and communities in caring for and protecting children, and in arguing for this role to be backed by government and society through investment and legislative change.
- to work alongside policy makers, practitioners and others to explore ways in which their decisions and actions can do more to realize children's rights and bring long-term benefits for children.

SCF in Zimbabwe

SCF (UK) has been involved in developmental initiatives in Zimbabwe since Independence, working mainly with marginalized groups. With its particular concern for mother and child care, it supported the government's drive to restore health services to the communal areas, following their disruption by the war. Out of this grew a broad-based community health programme which continued through the 1980s.

SCF also began work in the Zambezi Valley, supporting mother and child care projects, pre-schools, womens' clubs, nutrition groups and income-generating projects. This experience encouraged them to work on the commercial farms with The Farm Health Worker Programme.

Current Activities

Child Rights is an integral component of our programming. SCF advocates at national, provincial, district and community levels for the principles of the CRC to be adhered to. Our HIV/AIDS programmes promote behavioural change among affected communities within the commercial farms and in the Zambezi Valley. Our outreach programmes work through Traditional Healers and Midwives, School Health Masters and various groups of peer educators targeting out-of-school youth, fishermen, commercial sex workers, and the community at large. SCF also facilitates home-based care for terminally ill and orphaned children.

In partnership with local Rural District Councils, SCF facilitates a Community Based Management of Water Programme in the Zambezi Valley, including the building of small/medium-scale dams and micro-irrigation schemes in response to periodic drought. More recently it has supported the establishment of a private company which has taken over the construction side of this programme.

The Zambezi Valley Community Development Programme aims to facilitate improved implementation of SCF programmes for children in the region. Our Riskmap Programme can assess a community's vulnerability to household food security in the face of environmental hazards. The data is used to predict the proportion of households in a given area likely to face a food deficit, and to plan mitigatory strategies.

For more information please contact:

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For many years, farmworkers in Zimbabwe have been a marginalized and neglected community. Little has been known about what they think about their lives and their place in society. This is even more true of their children.

Children in our Midst provides us with the voices of several hundred children collected through essays and interviews. With a freshness, innocence and integrity unique to the young, they tell us directly about their lives, and give us their opinion based on their experiences. For many poverty is a source of great hardship.

> In my family we are eight ... We are too many .... So we just wish God will look after us so that we can finish our education. My father is the only one who works ... He cannot afford to pay school fees, food and clothes. ... This type of problem can influence parents to throw their children in bins, because food is not enough to feed them all.

But they are determined to try and achieve a better future through education.

> "School is important because if you want to be a doctor or look for a job, education is needed. And you can't go overseas if you can't read where the plane will be going. For people like President Mugabe and Border Gezi to be where they are is all about education. That's why people say, education is the wealth that I leave for you ... So that we children can be teachers, doctors, presidents and ministers."

Children in our Midst will enrich our understanding and sharpen our perspective on a range of issues that concern farmworkers children. Divided into nine chapters, the book exposes the themes of childhood, their perceptions of culture and family, health and welfare, education, the farm and the wider world.

Despite their hardships and difficulties, what we hear is not a voice of special pleading but one of resourcefulness, courage and hope for a better future.

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